

SIGHT & SOUND

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ARTICLES

Barking Up the Wrong Tree

Love and Death

Came the Night

The Pavilion of Purple Light

The Screen and The Ballet

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They Don't Fuss in Finland

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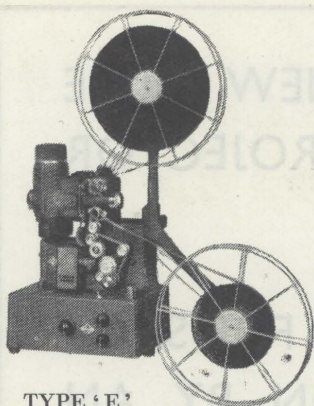
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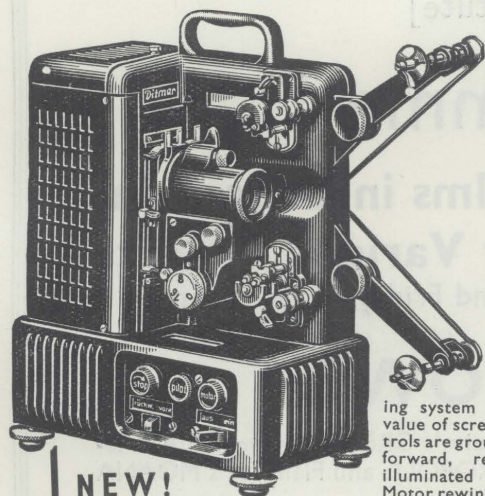
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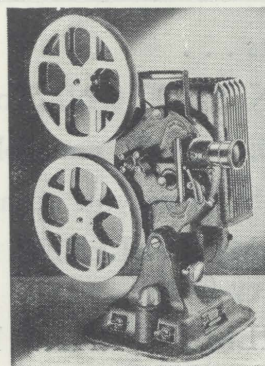
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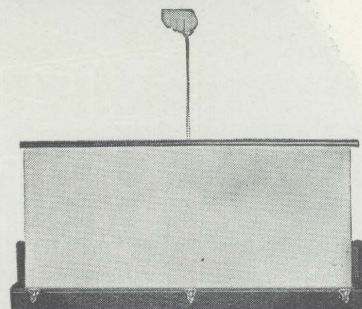
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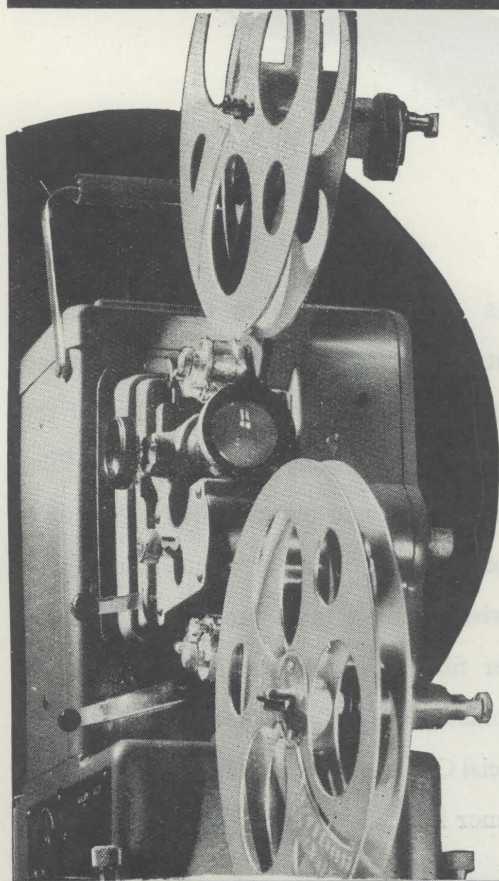
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COVER STILL: *Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars*

TO READERS

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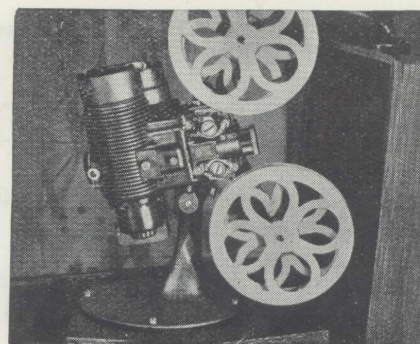
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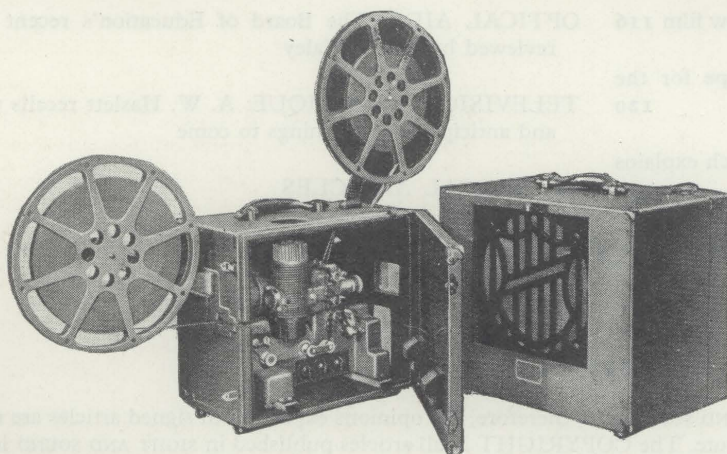
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THE QUARTER

NATIONAL FILM LIBRARY PROGRESS

The gallant efforts made after the war by the British film industry to recover the position which it had lost during the war years have frequently been recalled. One of the most successful and longstanding companies active at that time, the Stoll Film Company, has recently abandoned its studios at Cricklewood and over two hundred feature films, both positives and negatives, have been saved from destruction and handed to the National Film Library for preservation through the generosity and foresight of Sir Oswald Stoll. They cover the period from the first Stoll film *Comradeship* produced in 1919 up to the Company's more recent sound films. Several foreign films are also included in the collection which has been presented on permanent loan. Amongst the more interesting titles are: *Kipps*, the H. G. Wells' film in which George K. Arthur first appeared (produced in 1923), *Rocks of Valprez* with Ivor Novello (produced in 1919), *Garden of Resurrection* with Guy Newall and Ivy Duke, *Four Just Men*, a film of the Edgar Wallace story (1921); *Sign of Four*, directed in 1923 by Maurice Elvey, and a number of other Sherlock Holmes films also with Ellie Norwood; *Little Brother of God*, with Victor McLaglan; *Don Quixote*, with George Robey playing Sancho Panza (as in the later sound version with Chaliapin); *San Yen's Devotion* and *The Great Prince Shan*, two films made in this country with Sessue Hayawaka; *Boadicea*, a specta-

cular film eclipsed at the time of its production by the success of *Ben Hur*, *Atlantide*, Jaque Feyder's well-known film, *Dick Turpin's Ride to York*, and a number of other films featuring Matheson Lang; *The Glorious Adventure*, the famous colour film in which Diana Manners appeared; *Guns of Loos*, Madeleine Carroll's first film; *Hearts of the World*, D. W. Griffith's film featuring Lilian and Dorothy Gish, and many others. But for the Library's existence it is almost certain that these films, like many others in the past, would have been irreparably lost.

OTHER ADDITIONS

In addition to this group from the Stoll Studios the Library has acquired a number of other films of outstanding interest. Mr. Will Barker has presented a copy of his famous feature film of 1913, *East Lynne*. Another important film produced in the previous year, *Queen Elizabeth*, with Sarah Bernhardt, has also been added. In addition to the newsreels already being presented by British Movietonews, the March of Time Company is presenting a copy of each issue of the *March of Time* series to the Library; copies of all the issues of the second and third years have also been given, and later it is hoped to add the issues of the first year in order to make this series complete.

A number of current feature films have been given by their producers, including *They Won't Forget* (by First

National), *You Only Live Once* and *Vogues of 1938* (both by Walter Wanger), and *Slim* (by Warner Brothers). Several films have been added to the Loan Section of the Library. One is a film on *North Wales* (16 mm.). The others are reprints from the Preservation Section of the Library: *Conquest of the Pole* and *Voyage à Travers l'Impossible*, both made by Georges Méliès, *The Would-be Juggler*, a Max Linder film, three early comedies of Zecca, the well-known director who worked for Pathé in pre-war days, and another collection of very early films under the title *Beginnings of the Cinema*; all these are one-reel in length and are available on 35 mm. and 16 mm. film. Finally, Mr. Charles Urban, famous for his production of educational and interest films in the early days of the cinema, and for his association with the Kinemacolor process, has generously given to the Library a number of books, pictures and documents relating to his film work.

TWO OTHER FILMS

It is of interest to note that two compilations of early films are being shown at the time of going to press. One is the programme *Flashbacks* presented by Mr. Charles B. Cochran at the Palace Theatre, the second is a film *March of the Movies* produced by the Associated British Picture Corporation. In both cases the National Film Library has supplied some of the material used and to a certain extent has been able to advise on the selection of the items included.



The Man without Desire

Courtesy Adrian Brunel

A SUCCESSFUL SHOW AT THE PALACE

BY THE courtesy of Mr. Charles B. Cochran, the Palace Theatre was placed at the disposal of the National Film Library on the afternoon of Sunday, October 16th. As a result, over a thousand people saw an interesting programme of films selected from the Preservation Section of the Library.

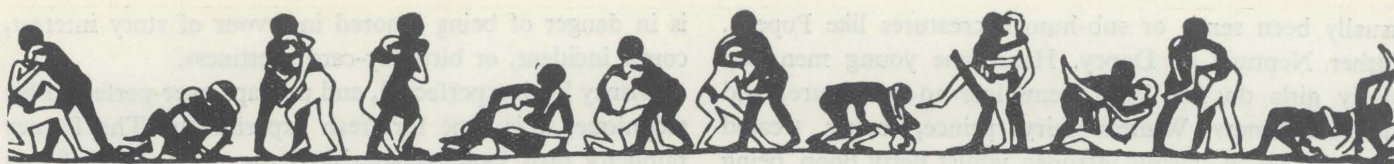
These included one of the first moving pictures ever made, by the Brothers Lumière, one of Georges Méliès' earliest works, *The Conjuror*, the *Great Train Robbery*, *Simple Charity*, in which Mary Pickford appeared in 1909, and *Dante's Inferno*, a five-reel film made in Italy which ran for a year at the Tivoli in 1912.

The second half of the programme consisted of extracts from later silent films up to the time of the first British talkie, *Blackmail*. The films selected were *Kipps* (1923), described in contemporary reviews as a *chef d'œuvre* of the Stoll Film Company and the film in which George K. Arthur was given his first big part; *The Man Without Desire*, Mr. Adrian Brunel's picture, made in 1922 and the first British film to have a run at the Tivoli; *A Cottage on Dartmoor*, Anthony Asquith's famous silent film; and, finally, two excerpts from Alfred Hitchcock's films *The Lodger* (produced in 1926) and *Blackmail* (1929), showing the comparison between his direction in the days of the silent film with his later productions since sound was introduced. The latter film is notable for using sound in a manner considerably in advance of its time.

During the interval Mr. R. S. Lambert, a Governor of the British Film Institute and a member of the National Film Library Committee, made an appeal on behalf of the Library. Films of the period following the war down to about 1929, he said, had been difficult to find and he appealed to anyone who knew of the existence of such films to let the National Film Library see them.

The Committee wish to acknowledge their debt to Mr. Cochran for the loan of the theatre, to Messrs. Anthony Asquith, Will Barker, Adrian Brunel, Sir Oswald Stoll and Mr. Arthur Dent for permission to screen their films, to Mr. Thorold Dickinson for help in the selection of the programme, to Dr. Brav for the selection of gramophone music and to the Forum Cinema for the loan of records. Without their co-operation the success of the show would never have been achieved.

In our Spring issue we published an article by Mr. J. L. Hardie, Deputy Education Officer of Edinburgh, entitled "Foreground and Background." Mr. Hardy asks us to state that he was indebted to Mr. Cons, of the Goldsmiths College, London, for a portion of the material but, through inadvertance, an acknowledgment was omitted while writing the article.



BARKING UP THE WRONG TREE

It is time the cartoon film studios tried some new experiments, according to LAWRENCE WRIGHT. As he has produced two such films single handed in his spare time, he cannot be dismissed as a mere armchair critic

I AM STILL not sure whether *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* is the best or the worst film I have ever seen; perhaps the tough old American engineer who told me with some emotion in his voice that it was the loveliest thing he had ever come across, was right. But I have an uneasy feeling that Walt Disney and his imitators are heading in the wrong direction, or if you like, barking up the wrong tree. They have clearly mastered their medium, but they may be in danger of positively defeating it.

The non-realistic, puppet-like animation which is the unique quality of a cartoon film character still persists in some degree, in spite of the smooth flowing animation produced nowadays by the sub-assistant-draughtsman who spends a whole week on the synthesis of a single gesture. Even where (as in many parts of *Snow White*) the animation is obviously based on the literal transcription of a photographic film of living actors, a trace of this artificiality remains. But if at last, by the appalling labours of even larger teams of animators, the illusion of real living movement and gesture is achieved, Shirley Temple might just as well take the part of Snow White at the outset, and save much time and ink. Disney and his followers are heading for the old trap into which painters fell when, exploiting the discovery that a sitter could be painted so "true to life" that he seemed "just as if he could walk out of the frame", they lowered their standards to those of colour photography. Into the same trap went the nineteenth century school of wood engravers when they abandoned the Dalziel tradition of engraving which was "of the wood, woody", for an elaborate technique of which the final achievement was the imitation of the very brush-marks in the reproduction of an oil painting.

The jerky walk of Felix the Cat entitled him to his proper place beside Mr. Punch and Petroushka, as primarily a puppet and not of this world, and was so clearly dictated by the medium itself that I still find it more *natural* (to a

cartoon film, that is) than the fluid elegance of *Snow White*. The subtleties of movement and expression in the latest "Multiplane Technicolour Masterpieces" are likely, to those who understand the labour involved, to take on the qualities of a piece of elaborate hand-made lace, or the Lord's Prayer written on a sixpence, and to derive their merit from the overcoming of problems so difficult that they need hardly have been undertaken at all. Like the wood-engraving of the nineties, they give me a headache.

In every art we accept numerous conventions so familiar as to go almost unnoticed. We have learned to accept those of the cartoon film: when the background behind the moving motor car goes reeling past, we do not object to seeing the same tree and the same cottage flash by over and over again. Even before sound accompaniment demanded synchronised movement, we fully expected the man with the hammer to keep time with the man with the saw and thus to simplify the artist's problems; we understood his difficulties and willingly conceded the short cut. When we were treated to a tracking shot of a street vanishing away to infinity, we did not complain of the fact that the houses were identical and even had the same windows open, so that House A, having moved a few yards, might become House B. We have become accustomed to indoor "panning" which, in order to allow the characters time to chase each other, goes on so continuously that Mickey's living-room must be at least a hundred feet long. We not only concede these liberties, we have grown to like them and to expect them as part of the fun. But now they are rarely taken.

Like the technique of animation, the "casting" of cartoon films also shows signs of breaking the rules. It is not through coincidence or by mere imitation that the most successful cartoon film characters have been animals. The grotesque nightmare world in which cartoon films are properly staged is no place for normal human beings. Where human characters have succeeded, they have



usually been semi- or sub-human creatures like Popeye. Father Neptune or Dopey. Handsome young men and pretty girls do not lend themselves to caricature, and therefore Snow White's fairy prince, being treated "straight", is an anæmic intruder, whilst Betty Boop, being caricatured, is a positively revolting creature. Having a non-realistic medium, let us have non-realistic characters as well as non-realistic animation.

And for the same reasons, let us stick to non-realistic draughtsmanship. A sort of pale, maudlin, pansy phase seems to have come over the cartoon studios. The good old black-and-white cartoons were mostly rich in that quality which I can only call "guts". This quality was not lost in *Father Neptune* or *The Band Concert*, nor in the greater part of *Snow White*. But of late there have been too many pink cherry-blossoms, drifting petals and falling leaves, and sunsets mirrored in rippling water. Children are supposed to prefer this sort of thing; actually of course they revel in exciting and preferably gruesome subjects, and are distinctly bored by the pretty effects at which their parents murmur "ah", and "how sweet!" To bring these pretty effects a step nearer to nature, the "multiplane camera" and the three-dimensional background have been introduced, with results reminiscent of the dioramas seen in the "River Caves" at a fun fair. The convention that a cartoon is a flat drawing has been abandoned. There is of course no good reason why models should not be used instead of drawings; some interesting all-model films have been made; but there is little to be said for a bastard technique which has the advantage of neither medium. The studios have taken yet another opportunity to run on to the wrong lines.

Had some of this money and time been put into experiments with fresh methods of treatment within the limits of flat drawing, it might have been found by now that cartoon films need no more be limited to the coloured line-drawing than book illustration is limited to the methods of Arthur Rackham and Mabel Lucie Attwell. There is no technical reason, for instance, why a flat poster-like treatment in bold colour should not be used, or a free and loose style of drawing in place of the universal tight ink outline. The Greek convention of draughtsmanship, using black and white with one flat colour, the highly decorative and live patterning of the Bayeux Tapestry, and the amusing formality of the "Penny Plain, Twopence Coloured" drama, might all be taken as motives for the treatment of a series of "period pieces" which would be a refreshing change. Although there may be only a limited public for pure abstract films in the Len Lye manner (which I doubt) moving *pattern* is a primary element in cartoon films; I have seen a seriously-intended lecture-diagram film lose its whole educational value through the potent effect of its incidental patterning, which so fascinated the class that the lesson in the film went unnoticed. This valuable element

is in danger of being ignored in favour of story interest, comic incident, or birthday-card prettiness.

Disney having perfected, and perhaps over-perfected his technique, it is time for fresh experiments. The Disney publicity men have so nourished the popular belief that thousands of drawings and countless man-hours go to making a film, that many artists who might have tried the medium have been frightened away. It is still commonly supposed that every frame of the film involves a completely new drawing. Certainly there is "ten per cent inspiration, ninety per cent perspiration" in making even a short cartoon, but to anyone who enjoys "dancing on paper", the extra labour of drawing in three dimensions (the third being the time-dimension) is like to be compensated by the extra fun and fascination of this exciting medium. I can think of at least a dozen artists who might do well to buy a Baby Ciné outfit for a start, and make experiments.

I have suggested that animation, characters and draughtsmanship are best treated formally and non-realistically; finally I would suggest that the sound-track should also conform. It was a sad day when Mickey Mouse first spoke. Even Charlie Chaplin had more justification. However accurately a drawing can be made to time its lip movements, the suggestion that it is actually speaking is an unacceptable affront to the imagination. What could be worse than the unrelated accompaniment of cartoons by wisecracking comedians or harmonious song-sisters? and what could be more appropriate than the crazy counterpoint of a Silly Symphony?



FAIRIES DANCING

From *Penny Plain, Twopence Coloured*, by A. E. Wilson. George G. Harrap.

SON OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN

Our Stockholm correspondent outlines a new film designed to put Sweden "back on the map"

THERE ARE NOT many exotic nations, in the proper sense of the term, in Europe. In the North of Europe, only one—the Lapps—a nomadic people living on the tundra and amidst the highlands in the Northern-most part of Scandinavia. A great deal has been written about them and two films have been made with their life, habits and customs as a background. But in these films the part of the Lapps was played by "white" actors and actresses. *The Son of the Midnight Sun*, which is now in course of production, by the A.B. Irefilm in Stockholm, will be quite a different matter—a genuine Lapp film, not only with Lapps as actors and actresses, but also Lapps in their natural surroundings.

And not only are the Lapp parts acted by Lapps, but all other roles—with only one exception—are played by persons, who in real life are precisely what they reproduce on the film. It was found that only people who had for years made themselves accustomed and familiar with these peculiar surroundings were able to blend with them in a convincing manner. The exception—the only one who is playing a "role"—is the celebrated Greenland explorer and writer on the Eskimos, Peder Freuchen, who has spent twenty years in Greenland and is known throughout the world since playing the part of the captain in the great film *Eskimo*. The producer is the manager of the company himself, Olaf Thiel; the stage manager is the Swedish-American, Thor Brooks; and the camera man is Sepp Allgeier, the Austrian who gained a world-wide reputation by such films as *The Rebel* and *The Struggle for the Matterhorn*.

Over Lappland's endless, snowy vastness broods the murk of the Arctic winter. As far as the eye can see there is snow, and nothing but snow, with just three or four teepees to relieve the monotony. It is a winter camp; a couple or so of miles distant thousands of reindeer scrape the covers of ice aside to get at the lichen beneath.

One night a snowstorm passes with destructive fury across this dismally grand landscape. That night the young and well-to-do Lapp Nila and Nonje, the grandfather of his sweetheart, Marja, lose their reindeer herds. Nila has to make his way to Kiruna, the ore town, to try and find work. Marja takes up the work of a Lapp teacher.

Four years have passed since the love story of the young people was interrupted. Nila has earned sufficient money to buy some reindeer and he marries Marja. But now a fresh struggle commences—fresh troubles and tribulations overwhelm them. A white stranger has gained some sinister hold upon their people and threatens to destroy them.

It is not alone the fierce and rugged majesty of the Arctic winter that speaks to us in this film. We are also enabled to accompany the Lapps on their summer migration to the Norwegian coast, across flower-decked, gently



undulating hills, through smiling valleys—this incomparable landscape which each summer entices thousands and thousands of tourists from all the four corners of the earth to Norwegian waters.

Nila and Marja accompany their tribe to Norway. Fortune favours them during the brief, ever-light Arctic summer.

In the autumn they return once more to the mountains and the tundra. Winter makes its appearance once more, and brings in its train struggle and dangers. A flock of wolves drives a herd of reindeer towards a precipice, thousands of animals are in danger of their lives and are saved only thanks to the courage and incredible skill in ski-running of Nila and his tribe.

Sepp Allgeier, the Austrian cameraman, says: "It was only during the first few weeks of the Arctic winter that I missed the glitter of the glacial sun. I grasped very soon that here man and the animals played the greatest part, and that they fitted surprisingly well into the scenery. I believe we have succeeded with things such as have never been seen on the screen. Merely the ski-ing by the Lapps is bound to be an insoluble mystery to every spectator who is interested in sports. There are moments I shall never forget—for example when thousands of reindeer came with a rush towards the river and the ice broke with a deafening noise beneath their weight."

The production has, of course, been the subject of the very keenest interest, and the Swedish film public is eagerly looking forward to seeing the result. It is hoped that the release of this film will be Sweden's first step towards recovering her eminent position in the film trade of the world.



Yellow Jack

M.G.M.

A MONTH OR TWO ago I visited an exhibition of black-and-white drawings by the Spanish artist, Goya, at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The collection had been lent by the Madrid Government, and with an unhappy topicality consisted largely of representations of horrific scenes in the Peninsular War. Every repulsive aspect of human brutality and violence had been noted down, with some intention, no doubt, of sickening the observer at the extremes of cruelty to which men are capable of descending; yet the drawing which to me seemed to bring the most authentic thrill of horror was not any of these, but one of another sort, entitled *El Amor e la Muerte*—"Love and Death."

In this a female figure, who might have been the original pictorial rendering of "woman wailing for her demon lover", was portrayed holding in her arms a man mortally wounded in a duel, just as he had evidently dropped back into them an instant before. His sword, fallen from his hand, lay on the ground at the bottom of the picture. The fight was ended, the stroke of death had been dealt; and the tragic impact of this single mournful moment of comparative rest was ten times more powerful and strong than that of all the degraded and open cruelties which hemmed it round.

The true subject of art is repose, not turmoil, and the æsthetic theory which held the Doryphorus to embody a profounder ideal than the Laocoon is one which will only be shaken fleetingly and must always return. The basis of this assurance is no doubt a conviction about the ultimate nature of the universe.

Whether we philosophise consciously or not, every item in our creative activity must be referred back to a system of metaphysical beliefs—never more than partially explicit—

LOVE

AND

DEATH

Some reflections on a picture by Goya.

The author is ARTHUR VESSELO

and every work of art must be taken as a projection of this system into concrete form. Only a completely pessimistic-fatalistic view can postulate a fundamentally non-coherent system (the very words argue a contradiction, and the fact that it is difficult to express the idea otherwise suggests the depths to which our implicit belief in orderliness goes); for even the pure materialist, who scorns transcendentalism, usually looks forward to an organised and rational state of things in the physical future. He does not foreshadow a world dominated inevitably at the last by evil and chaos; and unless such a doctrine be accepted, any work of art which implies it is by so much the less a work of art. If such a doctrine is accepted, then art, as a striving towards ultimate fulfilment, becomes almost meaningless.

It might be urged that this would deny any value to tragedy; but that would only be true if tragedy were concerned to set before us a tissue of disastrous futilities. Far from doing so, it derives its greatest power from the necessity of its logical consequences; and if these consequences are catastrophic, that is because the artistic creator being himself materially limited, naturally approaches the problems of mankind in the first place from a materially limited aspect, and when the field of reality is narrowed down in this way, when life, so to speak, is taken in the short run, its outcome is too often catastrophic. But tragedy of the highest kind rises above the flat statement of an unhappy case, and injects into its whole atmosphere some hint of a further reality, of a plane on which suffering—the very suffering which it is its duty so faithfully to portray—is transmuted and contradictions resolved.

So considered, Goya's "Love and Death" may be said to occupy a sort of midway position. In representing an after-

math, a summing-up in repose of a concluded series of events, the picture rises above the mere portrayal of a fragmentary and futile scene of violence; in that respect it is tragic. But to the extent that the implied violence of the preceding series of events is not transcended in the issue, the picture falls short of the highest tragedy. Its sphere is material and sensual, its Love ferocious and possessive, akin to hate, its Death grotesque, bloody-garbed, and grim. Here, painful and exact, are the sightless eyes, the distorted mouth, of the carnal mask; but beyond that the artist does not think to go.

A DISTINCTION

It is, of course, impossible to apply *in detail* the same precise canons to every medium. Thus, a distinction must be made between the still arts—painting, drawing, sculpture—and those which have temporal movement. For the still arts, repose in its most obvious form is essential; but for those which themselves move, repose, too, must be sought through movement. The well-known opposition between dynamic and static has a quite different meaning in each context.

The dynamic is that which embodies a vital synthesis; the static is that which seizes upon an isolated phase and forgets to relate it to a whole. Few would deny that the goal of art is the dynamic, not the static. With the still arts, therefore, any direct representation of violent movement is bound to miss fire, because it can never give us more than an unrelated phase of such movement. The battle-recordings of the old historical artist are now better done by the news-cameraman; and Goya's horrors, one feels, are in a largely similar category. The true synthetic summing-up of a totality of movement in the still arts must itself be still—superior to the flux of phases, not merely one of them.

In the moving arts, on the other hand, the synthesis takes place through a temporal progression, in which the flux of the outer world may be directly imaged. The moving art which offers the clearest antithesis to the still arts mentioned is undoubtedly the film. Here the misconceived attempt to produce "compositions" analogous to those of painting has more than once in the past led to the accumulating of a series of static pictures instead of the formation of a moving unity. That which is dynamic in still art is so because of its inner completeness, its triumphant independence in projecting the metaphysical system by which the artist is motivated; but reduced, in the same outward shape, to the status of a dependent moment in a continuous chain, it loses all its virtue of synthesis and becomes little more than an impediment: it has been removed, in fact, from the higher plane of synthesis to a lower where it can represent only a phase, and from the dynamic has become static.

By an equivalent inversion, the accentuated movement which is static in still art is dynamic in moving art, for in the



The Texans

Paramount

latter field it can help to build up a totality greater than itself. On the same principle, Classical Greek friezes (in which the unity is that of the frieze as a whole, not of the separate items) abandon the ideal of immediate rest, and present scenes of battle and vigorous movement. Indeed, the necessity of reaching repose through a summing-up (and overcoming) of movement as such would almost seem to involve the necessity of an *exhaustion* of movement, of an *exaggeration* of the normal movement of the outer world in order to crowd into the small space available a sufficient representation of *all* movement—anything less than which would be less than the metaphysical totality aimed at.

THE FILM MUST MOVE

Since movement is not confined merely to its physical and external aspects (a recited passage of verse has movement) this does not mean that in a stage-play, for instance, the characters should be perpetually chasing one another over the boards. Nevertheless, the more the basic freedom of physical movement which a medium possesses, the more is it evidently bound to employ that freedom. Hence part of the reason for the repeated assertion, rarely analysed, that "the film must move", for the film is the extreme case of a medium which is unrestrained in its freedom of physical movement. But repose is still the ultimate aim, whatever the apparent paradox: that is indicated on the surface by the way in which a film which is full of violence and bloodshed—such as *Gold is where you find it* or *Spawn of the North*—makes a point of ending on an especially calm note. If the effect is sometimes crudely achieved, the intention behind it goes very deep.

As to which is finally more complete and revealing—the unity at rest of the still art or the unity in movement of the moving art—that is a question to which no direct answer need be given. What should be clear, however, is that one must reject out of hand the hasty prejudgment that a universe which exists for us as a perpetual flux can only be adequately represented by an art whose works themselves proceed through flux.

By analogy, it may be asked which is better likely to reveal character—a face in lively movement or a face at rest? The former will normally give up its secrets only after a lapse of time, when conflicts of mood or variations of environment have cancelled one another out, and when the habitual veil of conscious affectation has been eventually pierced; but the face in complete repose—the repose of sleep, perhaps—transcends all these partial temporal obstacles, and can deliver its message immediately to the perceiving eye.

The opposition between the two dynamic ideals we have been discussing is far-reaching, and is carried beyond art into theories about the ultimate nature of reality. To the materialist the highest reality is constituted by the perpetual flux which greets his perceptions: movement and change are his gods, and the philosopher's Absolute a static abstraction. That is to say, he treats the fundamental repose involved in a metaphysical totality or Absolute as if it were on the same level as a single minor phase of material movement abstracted from its context and, as it were, frozen stiff: a notion no more valid here than when we consider the relationship between still and moving art.

In fact, the notion is less valid here; for whereas art must in all circumstances approach its representation of reality by means, somehow or other, of the outward material form, a comprehensive understanding of reality must attempt at the last to transcend the limitation. Still and moving art may be strictly parallel in value, since both in principle pursue the same end, the setting-up of a state of ultimate repose; but the conception of reality as flux and the conception of reality as repose—a consummate, all-embracing repose (not "motionless" but superior to motion as implying external change and destruction)—cannot be held to be equal.

The same misunderstanding of reality is at the bottom of the almost universal Western belief that action, however crass and violent and destructive, is superior to thought, however original and creative. Thought is conceived of as essentially subservient to action; and violence is deified, given only that it is of a sufficiently spectacular magnitude. "The man of thought," says Spengler with a sneer, "merely ponders on life; the man of action," he continues with a thunderous change of tone, "*is* life." To those who speak in this way, the fierce, self-devouring passions of Goya's "Love and Death" are the only reality, above which nothing can rise.

It is possible to cloak this belief, and to compromise by saying that action need not necessarily be destructive; but experience shows well enough that the worship of action for its own sake does begin and end in violence. Physical movement on its own is perpetual self-annihilation; and physical love and physical death are obverse and reverse to one and the same medal.

In the true sphere, it is action which is subservient to thought. Thought—or contemplation—is the striving of a mind towards oneness with its universe. But the universe is infinite, the human mind finite, immature, and bounded by shadows. Invariably there comes a point beyond which the mind, entangling itself deeper and deeper in problems whose solution evades its grasp, cannot for the moment continue. Its little powers are weakened, its slow course brought to a halt; and at such a point the only way out is to cut the Gordian knot of harassed and frustrated thought by action. Just as it is the break in the circuit which creates the visible spark to bridge the gap, so action only occurs where thought fails. The effort at contemplation breaks down, and the second-best of physical action intervenes to help it build itself up again.

Those who are unaccustomed to this idea will probably make no sense of it: they are likely to raise a number of plausible objections, of which one at least may be partly answered here. The chronological priority of action in the world as it presents itself to us is no argument for the higher value of action. One might as well argue, on the same lines, for the superiority of the *amœba* to man.

On the other hand, the assertion that action is subordinate to contemplation is far from being a flat rejection of all physical activity in the sense of urging all and sundry, here and now, to sit down and henceforth to do nothing but contemplate. The inadequacy of ordinary human minds is too great, their unpreparedness too apparent, their existence in the environment of a material world too formidable an obstacle. There must always be a hierarchy of physical and mental activities according to individual capacity and need; and in the predominantly mental realm every category of thinking, "applied" as well as "pure", should be able to find a place. In the same way that art must find its way to reality through external representation, so thought is absolutely bound, in its gropings after higher truth, not to neglect research into the nature of the external world.

The alteration that is called for is a thorough reorientation of ideas, a complete inversion of the barbaric Spenglerian doctrine which in one form or another is allowed to govern popular instincts, and a re-establishment of the hierarchy of deeds and thoughts on the right footing, with the apex at the top instead of at the bottom. If we could do this, we should be ousting Thor the Thunderer and his heavy-browed companions from their cut-throat Valhalla, and setting up in their stead a divine ideal of repose, serenity and peace.

CAME THE NIGHT!

This is a tale of long ago, when the pictures flickered in a Cornish village and the whole world stood agape. It tells also of the same town twenty-five years later and of a man who sat on a cliff-top and thought of the films between. It is written by J. C. TREWIN

IT WAS ON A May night in, I think, 1913, that last blissful pre-war year whose joys seem to us now to be as remote as the songs the Sirens sang.

A Cornish village, on the extreme southern tip of England and ten miles from a railway station, was more excited than it had been since the last Feast Monday sports. The "pictures" had come; that night they would appear in the Reading Room.

I find it difficult to convey just how exciting this was. Perhaps they might have felt one-tenth as thrilled in beleaguered Lucknow on hearing the pipes of Havelock. "The pictures", you see, meant unimaginable things; this, children were told, would be a real Arabian Night, and Sindbad himself had never known an experience half so wonderful.

The film, I remember, was hardly Arabian. It was, indeed, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—and the touring manager called it an Epic. Even in those days the cinema had begun to develop its language.

There was a certain amount of trouble before the Epic began. As we came up across the Beacon, with the line of the sea visible beyond the fields and an oil-tanker moving sluggishly on the horizon, two disappointed figures approached us.

"We must wait for her," they said in unison. "Two hours more, the lamp-man says—and us first there too. . . . The limelight's wrong."

So we went home, wondering, while up in the Reading Room, furnished hastily with benches and a crinkled white sheet, "she" submitted to the ministrations of the lamp-man. Two hours later we returned. The boys were on every window-sill, making their usual noise; the rest of us—parents and younger children—sat tightly together on the backless benches. With an odd whirr-and-rattle that I can hear yet, *Uncle Tom* began.

It was certainly the first film anyone there had seen, and it was my first entertainment of any kind. There has been nothing to compare with it since. I have been thrilled in a hundred theatres in a hundred ways, but *Uncle Tom* remains with me as the first and the wildest excitement, never again to be recaptured.

The sheet was creased and crumpled, the projection unsteady. The sub-titles whirled on and off before we could spell out the first line. The most touching incident in the

life of Little Eva appeared upside-down, and for two or three minutes everyone in the film slid gracefully sideways.

Probably it was the oddest affair; no one in the audience minded, the occasion was too momentous. People wept and they cheered. There had never been so triumphant a night in the Reading Room's history. The box-office returns must have been well over a pound, and although towards the close the lantern fell over and one of the high-perched boys put his hand through a window, nobody worried. The success-story was complete.

Next day everyone talked of *Uncle Tom*. The picture had gone; its fame stayed. Other pictures came; none could surpass our masterpiece. Even the outbreak of war fifteen months later caused less excitement.

That was twenty-five years ago. I was in the village this summer. It is still ten miles from a railway station. The Reading Room is unchanged. The road from my headland home is unaltered. From the Beacon the line of the sea looks as it did on that May night. The same oil-tanker might be passing along the horizon. Yet, what a change!

This was the first conversation I heard. "Where you going to-night?" a youth asked his friend. Twenty-five years before, the friend would have been on foot and the reply would have been "Down village." To-day he straddled a powerful motor-bicycle and replied in one word: "Flicks."

To my alarm the village knew all about Robert Taylor and Annabella and Marlene and the Garbo. It knew its Laughton and its Laurel and its Shearer. Boys whistled theme songs. Shirley Temple was the toast of the fishermen's cottages. My lonely village was a Hollywood outpost.

I had been there for three days before I realised how illogical my attitude was. Why should I be dismayed that these villagers took the cinema for granted when I did also? We had all grown up; the cinema had grown with us. Sitting on a cliff-top, starred with sea-pinks and facing an empty, frothing sea which Mr. de Mille, bless his heart, would have covered with Roman galleys, I tried to remember my film-going career.

Not a very long record. *Uncle Tom* began it. Then there was Elaine. She was always about to be continued next week, and she lived in a ramshackle West Country cinema that called itself proudly the Theatre Elite. Twopence each on Saturdays brought us an hour of Elaine—at least

three Thrilling Episodes. Weekly we left her suspended from a rope or riding bareback over a precipice. I remember vividly that I bade her farewell for the last time in an opium joint in Limehouse Causeway—that most innocent of East End streets—where she was to be tortured by an Oriental master-mind.

I have no doubt that she escaped. The fact remains that I missed the next instalment, and my sense of regret has grown with the years. Rising, I salute Elaine's gallant shade.

Then, Chaplin. One cinema was packed for a week during the darkest months of the War: it had advertised simply, without further explanation: "This week. Charlie in two pictures."

I remember, too, being taken to a dismal hall for a film version of *The School for Scandal*. The interminable subtitles came from the play: the cameraman had obviously stationed himself on a high mountain and the characters seemed to be from some fantastically remote Lilliput. We all preferred Elaine and *Dawn on the Boundless Prairie*.

After this, my chronology is muddled. Films had become a normal part of life. There had been two cinemas in this Western town. Now there were five, and soon five became seven. How excited we were about the Civil War battles of *The Birth of a Nation*, the Babylonian scenes in *Intolerance*, the lurid poster-colours of *The Glorious Adventure*, the entanglements of a Phillips Oppenheim film, the tinsel-and-gauze of *Where the Rainbow Ends*!

We liked plenty of drama. Strong men stood face to face. The adventuress poised her cigarette-holder. The villain snarled silently. Although, on the screen in those days it appeared always to be raining, we had come to take the dancing, vertical lines as part of the fun. Sub-titles annoyed us as a rule—there were too many of them. I cherish the

memory of one unmatched caption from an otherwise made-to-measure "Western":

NIGHT FELL RAVENOUSLY UPON THE RANCH AND PETE SUCCUMBED TO THE WOOING EMBRACES OF GOLDEN SLUMBER.

Even to us there seemed to be something wrong. . . . We supposed it was a rather good and literary way of saying that Pete went to sleep.

But we were growing up; so were the films. The Sheiks passed and *Ben Hur* and *Way Down East*. Cinemas flourished, theatres faded. Suddenly the talkies arrived with a trumpet-blare and our town cheered the first grate-and-rasp of *The Singing Fool* and *Black Waters*. The tide surged in; the living theatre was driven back to the last patch of sand. Then a famous house that had stood for more than a century fell to the breakers' pick and a new super cinema leapt to the skies.

To-day fewer than half-a-dozen legitimate theatres remain in three counties; the number of cinemas runs into hundreds.

The films have grown: we have grown with them. The few saplings of 1913 have become the thick and tangled forest of 1938. Or is it a jungle? That was not for me to say, I reflected as I rose from the cropped, salt-stiffened turf and looked out to sea where the inevitable oil-tanker was spilling smoke along the horizon—just as she had done on that May night in 1913 when *Uncle Tom*, best film ever made, flashed jerkily on the crinkled sheet.

The newest generation does not know what it has missed. It has been brought up on Goldwyn; Mr. Korda is its god-father; Shirley Temple is its playmate. What is it to know of the raptures of a quarter of a century ago?

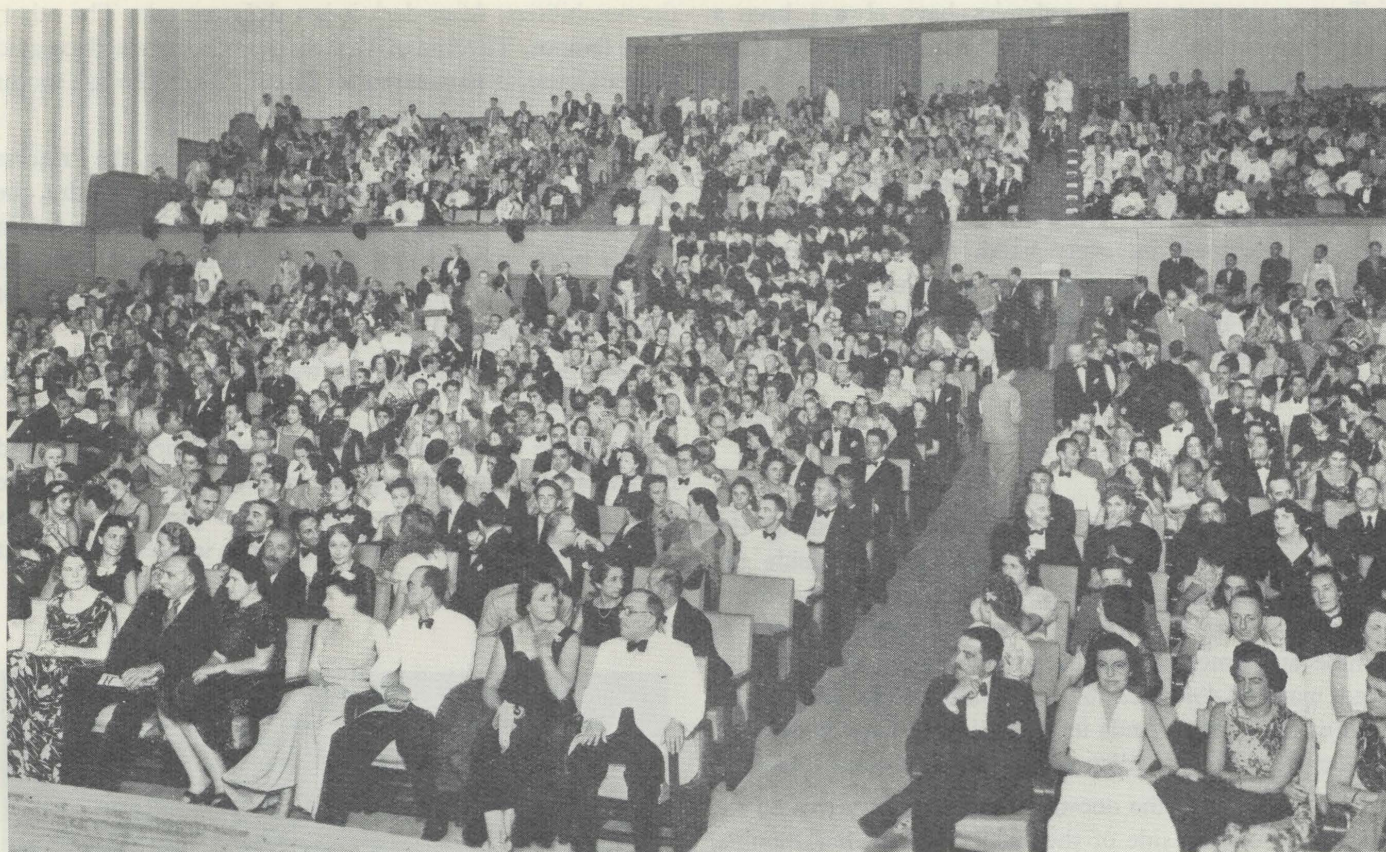
Only twenty-five years. But oh for a breath of that unsophisticated, that unforgotten, that Epic, Stupendous and Soul-Stirring night in May!



Gateways of the East and West

"Sitting on a Cliff Top"

G.B. Instructional



FESTIVAL IN VENICE

by EVELYN M. ZASIO

"The pleasant place of all festivity

The revel of the earth, the Masque of Italy . . ."—BYRON

THEY HAVE built her a mighty autostrada bridge and the largest garage in Europe, they have brought London within six hours of her—yet there is still magic in the City of the Waters.

Toni, whose people have been gondoliers to the same Venetian family for generations, knows, despite the rivalry of modern speed-boats, that his barque will outlive them all. So, when German lovers plight their troth before the palace where Wagner died and Americans hustle their love-making to the slow rocking of the gondola he, always the onlooker, says, "I sigh, I sigh!"

This moon-lit night in late August, as he bears me over the wide lagoon to the Lido, there is a movement of craft as in a festa time and I ask him the why and wherefore.

"Films, movies, flicks!" His voice is sharp. "They're here in their thousands, Engleesh, Americans, French, even Japs and Indians. I've seen the Marlena, the Douglas and our very own Elsa Merlini."

There are star sparkles on the water, sparkles in his eyes.

"The other day, fifty great airmen flew down here with

the Duce's boy, and all the Mussolini family, except the Duce, went to see his film. They say it's bellissima, but I—I think we've still much to learn."

Pause for reflection, and then—

"The ladies, their health," another swish of the oar, "how they do dress every night. All the gold in St. Mark's Cathedral wouldn't cover their jewels and gowns. When they go into the cinema or on to the open-air terrace of the Excelsior my wife runs back and forth from one entrance to another to try and see all the dresses. They are funny, the women, with this love of adornment.

"How the Germans make a fuss of this Exhibition! They've got their great giant advertisements plastering the hoardings and everything is Deutsche, Deutsche, Deutsche!"

In his Venetian voice, there was all the scorn for the intruder that this proud people has ever had. Venice has always been a charming hostess, but she is rather wary when too much propaganda is put before her and does not readily tolerate the hint of supremacy.

Tempora mutantur. Art polemics have always been a great conversation piece in Venice. Some years ago, from the one and only *Florian's* in St. Mark's Square to the smallest cafe on distant *rivas*, all discussions centred round the Giorgione picture, *The Tempest*. Was it a Giorgione? Was it worth the million the Government paid? Every year has brought some new artistic discussion. Now, in August, films are the topic on every hand. And all are experts. Every one of them of all the countries. "They all think they know best," says my gondolier, "and standing outside the Excelsior garden you can hear them hissing and booing or clapping like mad."

THE NEW VENICE

So we went on, the lagoon now more deserted, up the canal to the flamboyant new Casino, just alongside the Cinema. Here, the new Venice rears its twentieth-century diametrics. The old *Ridotto* where Casanuova loved to gamble and embroil, has been replaced by this straight-lined, marbled, "*nove-cento*" place on the Lido. And the art born of the century finds its home in the City of the Arts but far from the Palladian glories of the Grand Canal.

I wondered how the one-time merchant city treated the practical, business side of the Exhibition. At her Biennial International Art Exhibitions, there has always been a good market for pictures and works of art; but in this Hollywood-cum-Rome realm of picture was there any commercial transaction?

On the beach of the Excelsior Hotel next morning, I was to see how business was done. X, Y and Z were there grouped round the divan of a front-row cabin, X, Y and Z being international big-names in big-film-business. A scorching sun was sealing their pacts, and, though in their play-time suits of next-to-nothing, there was none of the spirit of *dolce far niente* about them.

From the scintillating sun-reflected waters of the Adriatic behind the first row of cabins it is a short cry to the famous beach restaurant, the Taverna, where celebrated nonentities from the four corners of the earth eat "informally." An "informal" luncheon at this beach restaurant is a Parnassian feast. . . . Venetian "scampi" (a kind of prawn) with a bottle of Soave and the fresh fruit of the Estuary, luscious green figs and giant yellow peaches with a flavour of the musk, and grapes which promise a good vintage year for 1938. Costumes here are as varied as the nationalities. Shorts, slacks, swimming suits, peasant attire, formal silk frocks, all are to be seen, and Debrett and the *Almanac de Gotha* are represented in their full array.

AFTERNOON AND EVENING

Later the same folk are in at the afternoon cinema show, but they go in and out so quietly that one cannot recognise

the notabilities. After dark it is a different tale. The other, more famous, Taverna of Venice, near the newly-decorated Opera House, is patronised for dinner. Then the fast motor boats swirl theatrewards across the lagoon.

The Princes Christopher and Paul of Greece, the Princess Olga, the Princess Aspasia and the Princess Alexandra, the Princess Juliana, Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands—in all this galaxy mere counts twinkle like the lesser stars and barons are two a lire. Over all twitter the high voices of women and the chink of money.

"S-s-spend," whisper the waves on the Lido beach, "s-s-spend. . . ."

Yes, there is still magic in the City of the Waters. And if in Wardour Street men giggle gently, no echoes reach the shadows watching shadows by the sea. "In Venice," says d'Annunzio, "one cannot think if not in images." He might have said it of the films.



Marie Antoinette (Prizewinner)

M.G.M.

THE PAVILION OF PURPLE LIGHT

Travel all over the world, from Poona to Peru, and everywhere you will find the cinema appealing to the "inherent laziness in men". Here J. VIJAYA-TUNGA tells you of some of his experiences

THE POPULARITY of the cinema all over the world lies possibly in its appeal to the inherent laziness in men. Every other form of entertainment calls for some degree of concentration while the cinema alone allows us complete relaxation and distraction. True enough, one could eat melon seeds while actors and actresses portray the fate of the Fragrant Concubine in the Pavilion of Purple Light. One need not listen to the words of their songs, one need not watch the hero raising his leg to make-believe that he is mounting his horse, but one must in the act of ordering or eating melon seeds pay some little attention to the affairs in the Pavilion of Purple Light, an attention that is begrudged as much by Mr. Yi Ying as by Mr. John Jones, who, if they could, would get their entertainment with complete bodily and mental relaxation. This is possible at the cinema.

The emotions are, of course, agitated, while seeing a film, but not to such an extent that a melon seed could get stuck in one's throat, or the chewing gum inadvertently swallowed. So that in one thing the Mandarins of the cinema are right, that the box office success lies above all in the entertainment value of a picture. And our entertainment is in proportion to the trials and conflicts and discomforts of the actors in the story. It is not the custard pie nor its being thrown, but its impact upon the victim. The predicament of "Our Gang" hanging in mid-air hoisted up by a crane is entertaining solely because of the probability of their immediate fate.

"Do not let a tiger cross a bridge" is one of the maxims of the hunter, meaning it is easier to hit it or at least to put it to rout, while it is yet on the other side. But on the screen the entertainment value is greater if the hunted and the hunter are both on the same side of the bridge. This is part of the psychology of the cinema as it is being evolved today. But in those early days neither producer nor "consumer" cared so much about subjectivity or objectivity so long as there was something to be shown and seen that could distract an audience. To the East which had come to regard the lantern slide in itself a marvel, the moving picture appeared as the last word in scientific achievement. And the faster it moved the greater the excitement, that is, the greater the entertainment.

It was on that basis, modelling itself on Hollywood's earliest efforts, that the cinema thrived in India to begin with. My first experience of a movie was in 1918 in Bombay, when the *Birth of Shri Krishna* and *Tarzan* with Elmo Lincoln, as a double attraction, drew monster crowds con-

tinuously to Bombay's leading cinema. *Tarzan* was, from the point of view of the Indian audience, immense, but the ever popular Indian legend of Shri Krishna was the real thrill provider, despite the undisguised mechanics of the studio which were glaringly visible on the screen. As exciting as the programme was the interval, when most of the audience, still remaining in their seats, ordered and drank various kinds of "aerated waters" and ate ices amidst a din of voices of sellers and buyers—a feature never absent from the Oriental scene.

To-day Indian film companies, such as the Ajanta Company, and directors like Mr. Bhavnani, are emulating the more ambitious themes of Hollywood, and in such pictures as *The Mill* essay social and economic problems of an industrialised India. There is too nowadays an Indian counterpart of Mickey Mouse in the *Merry Monkey*, all very up-to-date; nevertheless those early cinemas and pictures gave good value for the public's money as far as the cinema-going public was concerned.

It is really in out-of-the-way villages in India and Ceylon that the cinema creates the greatest stir. Circuses for all their merry-go-rounds, acrobats, strong men and Junoesque women, come nowhere near the travelling cinema in its capacity for drawing crowds and arousing rustic enthusiasms. Such cinemas travel from village to village, staying at each place for three or four days. An Indian village has invariably a grove of mango or tamarind trees, and this is the usual venue of the visiting cinema. Once I went to such a cinema at a village near Madura. It was under a tent. The most exuberant element sat on the bare sandy earth, close to the screen, for which privilege they had paid two annas each, and myself and the other of Fortune's favourites paid six annas each for cushions on a carpet. The film was *Shri Rama Jayanti*, a Hindu legend filmed in Madras. The aerial flights of gods, in air-chariots, which resembled the wicker baskets of washer-women (the said chariots being hauled along wires), the prowess of Hanuman, the Monkey-Man, a gesticulating, bell-ankleted fat female in the role of Sita, these, for all their incongruity, were the highlights of the story. In its presence high-caste and low-caste, Brahmin and Vaisya, Hindu and Moslem, forgot social and caste distinctions, and vociferously whistled and shouted and clapped. As usual the interval was a welcome interruption when everybody went outside and spent more annas and pice on "soft" drinks, *pan-supari*, which is betel-leaf and areca nut, and the Moslem youths on *bidi*, or native cigarettes. Afterwards the audience recaptured their

enthusiasm for the crudely pieced continuity as if there had been no interval.

I recall an equally enthusiastic audience at a village called Beliatta in the south of Ceylon. Again it was under a tent. Here the elite had chairs nearest the screen for which they had paid twenty-five cents each, and we the poorer who had paid only ten cents each had hard benches at the back, but with a better view. The film was not one continuous reel but a piercing together of snippets of Charlie Chaplin episodes, Laurel, and Charlie Chase in hilly-billy scenes, naval manœuvres of years past, foreign royalty and other miscellaneous items. The programme lasted an hour, and a good time was had by all, including the vendors of "young coconuts" and *bulath-vidi*, which is the Singhalese for *pan-supari*.

Westerners travelling in the East are quick to smell smells, but perhaps because of the open air situation of those temporary cinemas or more likely because of the cleanliness and light cotton clothes of those audiences I never detected any strong body smell either among the Tamil-Moslem audience at Madura or the Singhalese-Moor audience at Beliatta. For smells the Buda-Pesth cinemas take a lot of beating. At that particular cinema there the film was De Mille's *Sign of the Cross*, with complete uncensored petting orgies to which Fredric March and Olivia de Havilland, I believe it was, were subjected. It kept the

audience spell-bound, leaving only the stranger to sample the smells. In Innsbruck the cinemas are usually at the back of shops, and they are more flea-infested than the dime movies on Second Avenue in New York.

In Tossa di Mar, in Catalan Spain, the local cinema is open only on two evenings a week and the *chicas* and *chicos* try not to miss each new film: though their fathers usually prefer the *Tabernas* to sitting still for two and a half hours in the cinema. On the occasion I went there the film shown was an early Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., picture with plenty of action and fisticuffs. It was a silent film with captions in Spanish. Every ten minutes or so the lights would go up while the operator did some adjusting or piecing together of the film, and one would see the local Smith Minors eating apples and other tit-bits, while the *senoritas* sat immobile and well behaved under the chaperonage of their mammas but quite aware that a few seats away there were their admirers and boy friends gazing longingly in their direction.

That was in April, 1936. Since then the local hotel has been commandeered into a children's school, the *Cura* has fled into less irreligious territory, and the *Iglesia* has been partly burnt down. However, it would be quite like the Catalans to keep their cinema intact and open on the usual two days in the week. For the element of *Fiesta*, which includes now the cinema, is one without which the Latin temperament cannot live, be it peace or war.



The Adventures of Marco Polo

United Artists

CHOP RUMA BESAR

or a little about film publicity in the Far East. R. H. WRIGHT, the author, has had personal experience of conditions beyond Suez

WHY IS IT THAT the British manufacturer and exporter does not make a great deal more use of the cinemas as a means of pushing his goods in the East—particularly the Far East? The thought has occurred to the writer as he has noted the intentness with which the close-packed audiences in the picture-houses of Singapore and Penang will gaze, hour after hour and night after night, at the antics of Laurel and Hardy or the curly head and smiling face of Shirley Temple. The same audience not one in ten of which ever dreams of opening a newspaper or magazine! For a perfectly good reason: nine-tenths of them cannot read the *printed* word displayed in a foreign language—but every one of them can understand the *pictured* word.

For to the Eastern native—even the minority who can read English—the pictured word conveys far more than the printed one. Should, however, the printed descriptive matter be done in his own language, so much the better; the picture catches his eye and holds his attention, while the reading of the caption or description follows.

From what the writer knows of the Eastern native, be he living in India, Malaya or the Dutch East Indies, the cinema provides the finest medium for the advertiser wishing to interest him in the goods he sells. Even the vernacular Press cannot compare with it. To begin with, the very fact of the goods *being* advertised on the screen is more or less a guarantee of their quality to the Eastern mind. Even to this day he appears to accept with child-like faith the lessons which the astute user of the films is out to teach him. This is a point which certain countries are well aware of when conducting propaganda campaigns in the East. The pity of it is that our own country does not appear to have recognised the fact.

Another point which the exporter and manufacturer would do well to bear in mind: the “movies” reach the very people he wishes to interest—those who have money to spend.

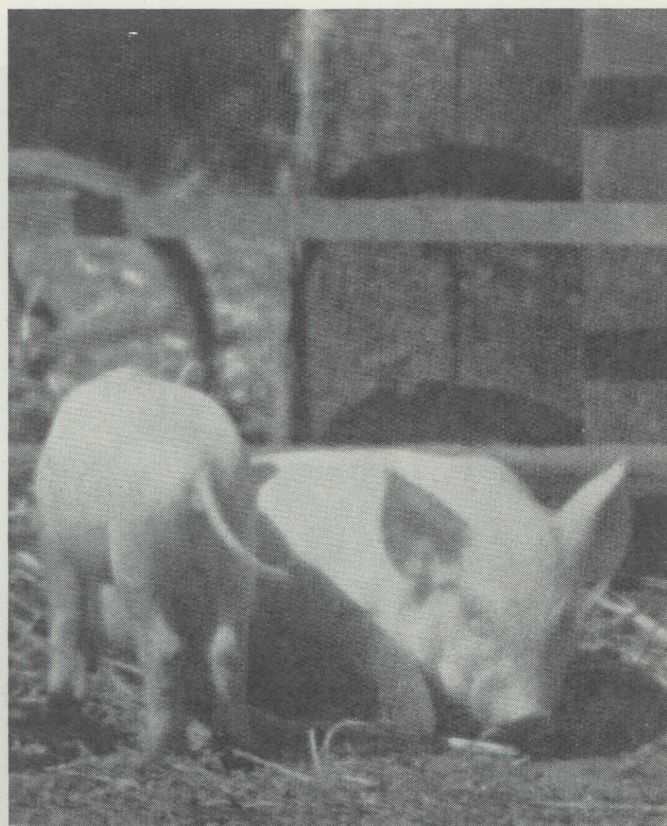
Were I a British manufacturer or exporter desirous of pushing trade in the East, I would proceed as follows:

For the benefit of the small European and better educated Asiatic population I should use the local papers printed in English—but only to a very limited extent. Those printed in the vernacular I should eschew altogether. Leaving out the fact that in many cases they are “here to-day and gone to-morrow,” too often they are simply propaganda sheets

depending on passing phases of pseudo-politicism for their precarious circulation. With the above exception I should concentrate entirely on the films.

Keeping well before my mind’s eye that the picture stands for at least 80 per cent of drawing power in the eyes of the Eastern native, I should see to it that (1) it is attractively and arrestingly displayed, (2) it tells a complete story in itself, and (3) it displays prominently the “chop” (brand or trade mark) under which I should market my goods.

With regard to (1), it is a fact that the Eastern native is attracted by colour to a remarkable degree; the more highly-coloured the picture is the better he likes it. Therefore I should concentrate entirely on coloured films in my screen advertising, being careful to see that the parts of the picture (or selling points) I wished to emphasise were the most highly coloured of all. At the same time, I should not overburden the film with a mass of detail. Plenty of contrast is what I should aim at, relying more on “tuppenny plain and penny coloured” than on artistic effect. It is to



Spring on the Farm

“Verboten”

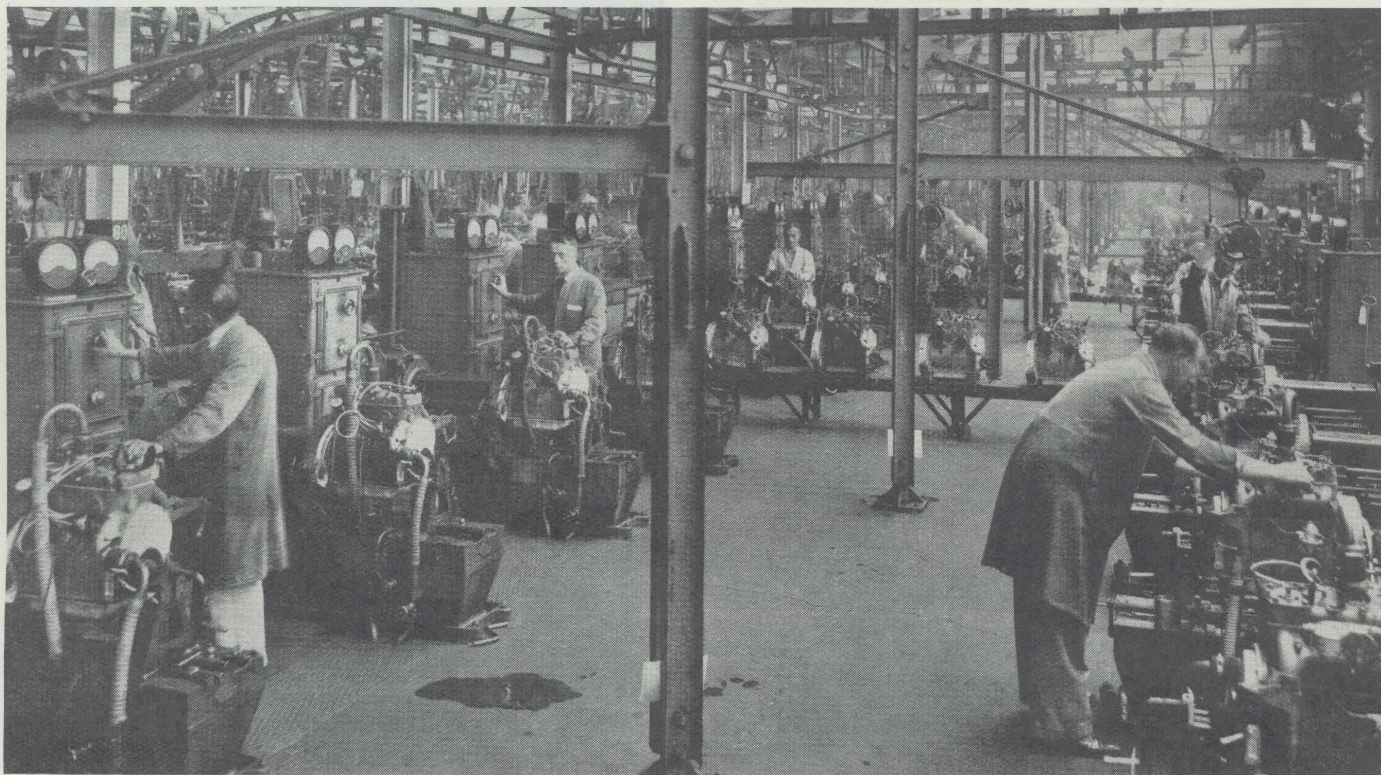
G.P.O.

be remembered that while the Eastern native will pass a Reynolds masterpiece with a shrug of the shoulders he will stand entranced before a gaudy theatrical poster. In his eyes the latter is the masterpiece.

As for (2), it is most important. Contrary to the expressed opinion of many travellers, a wide acquaintance with the Eastern native has led me to believe that he is intensely curious—that he likes to see how things are done. Therefore in my screen advertising I should make a point of showing the actual manufacture of the goods I am endeavouring to sell—particularly if they are food products. But in the case of the latter I should be most careful to emphasise the “untouched by hand” selling point. Whether we like it or not, to thousands of Easterns the Western Christian is still “unclean.” This being so, in my advertising I should in the case of, say, tinned milk, be careful to picture a farmyard scene with the cows being milked by *machines—never by hand, and, above all, by female hands*. The latter above all, owing to certain prejudices, religious or otherwise, is distinctly taboo. As for the animals shown in the farmyard scene, the cow I should display prominently, but on no account would I allow even a single pig to wander into view. There is a very good reason for this. Ludicrous as it may appear to the reader, to this day many devout Mohammedans and Hindus—particularly of the coolie class—incline to the belief that we Westerners are addicted to the drinking of pigs’ milk! Ergo, they argue, if we drink it we tin it also. “Whoso runs may read.”

Regarding (3), this is really corollary to the foregoing—and at least every bit as important. In my screen advertising I should endeavour to get my “chop”, or brand, firmly fixed in the minds of the audience in connection with the goods I manufacture. The Eastern native detests having to *describe* the article he wishes to purchase. What he appreciates is being able to say: “I want chop so-and-so”—and obtain the very article he desires, whether it be a tin of milk, a packet of matches, or a length of cotton cloth. Again, the picture stands for everything. If the prospective customer sees a film depicting the manufacture of, say, a certain brand of cigarettes, he looks for the “chop” on the finished tin by which to identify it in shop or bazaar. Old-established firm names count for little with him: it is the “chop” every time. Therefore it follows that, in addition to being prominently displayed on the screen, the actual “chop” itself should be homely and simple yet distinctive. A picture of a turkey, for instance, on a tin of cigarettes would sell far more of that particular manufacture than would one of the National Gallery or St. Paul’s Cathedral. A Malay would as likely as not describe the latter, rather vaguely, as “Chop Ruma-Ruma” (Houses”) or “Chop Ruma Besar” (“Big House”), but to him the turkey brand would be just “Chop Ayam Blanda” (“Dutch Hen”).

Bearing the foregoing facts in mind the British manufacturer will find that in the cinema he possesses the one sure and reliable medium for pushing his goods amongst the teeming millions of the Far East.



Austin Motors

“Show the actual manufacture”

EVIL EYE IN BELGIUM

The film industry in this bi-lingual land described by WINIFRED HOLMES

WHICH COUNTRY of the world is the most film-minded? The United States? Latin America? Australia? I don't know the statistics but Belgium can't be far behind with her 940 cinemas for a population of $7\frac{1}{2}$ millions, of which 110 are in Brussels—a town of 900,000 people.

Walk down the narrow and crowded artery of the Rue Neuve, from the Gare du Nord to the General Post Office, the centre of the town, and you will find sprinkled among the Bon Marchés and Prix Unis no less than ten cinemas, all in about five hundred yards! If you should miss a good film in its first run, for weeks you can track it down somewhere else; during my five weeks in and out of Brussels recently I could have seen *Elephant Boy* every day in one cinema or another. (*Elephant Boy* has been a particularly popular film in both Belgium and France.)

Belgium has never been Calvinistic like Holland—the Latin blood of the Walloons and the deep-rooted Catholicism of the Flemish prevent it—so there is no censorship except for children. French films are preferred in the capital with its French culture and in Wallonie too, because of language and sentiment, while in Flanders English, American and German films are more popular.

THE FLEMISH MOVEMENT

This is largely due to the violent reaction of the Flemish from all things French, especially speech. French films shown in Antwerp, Ghent and other Flemish towns now have Flemish captions. The "Mouvement Flamand", which is splitting the country in two, is Belgium's most pressing problem, but this is not perhaps the place to discuss it in.

The two most remarkable *cineastes* in the country are both of Flemish stock—Henri Storck and Charles Dekeukeleire, but as neither actively support the movement they keep clear of its political implications. But for these two pioneers the story of Belgian films would be negligible.

BRUSSELS "COCKNEY"

A few popular films are turned out each year by Gaston Schoukens of the "*pompier*" order—very old-fashioned in technique and based on music-hall acting and methods. The star is Gustave Libeau, a comedian with a huge following, supported by other comedians talking Brussels—equivalent to Cockney—whose humour is of the Boulevard order, crude to say the least of it. *Mon Père et mon Papa* was running to crowded audiences in May and June; *Le Roi de Pommes Frites*, an earlier production, was even more popular.

Brussels dialect has not much of a market outside the city, but as Flemish is almost the same as Dutch—with slight differences of dialect and pronunciation—the popular films made by Jan van der Heyden of Antwerp are distributed in Holland and find—when good enough—an appreciative market there. *De Witte*, acted chiefly by boys of 10 to 16, was popular and so was *Till Eulenspiegel lives now*. The famous mischievous little creature Till,

with his boyish pranks and Puckish humour, is a Flemish hero.

Havenmuziek shows the life of Antwerp's internationally important harbour, but not, unfortunately, in documentary form—Henri Storck wants to do that one day. *The Quack Doctor* tells the story of a Flemish village exploited by a trickster and what happens when he's found out!

THE EVIL EYE

Last year the first real full-length film of Flemish peasant life was made and won first prize at the national film festival. It is being shown again this year in one of the biggest cinemas in Brussels and is rousing a good deal of excitement and controversy. This is *Le Mauvais Oeil*, produced and directed by Charles Dekeukeleire, and written by Hermann Tierlinck, the most famous Belgian dramatist of the day.

Dekeukeleire has been greatly influenced by the Russians of silent days, particularly by Dovchenko's *Earth*, and has chosen only peasants to act a story of their own superstitious lives before the camera. The man with the supposed evil eye has a remarkable film presence, and the other peasants show their characters with dignity and unself-consciousness. The film is a rich and vividly human cross-section of country life in the Audenarde and other such unindustrialised districts of Flanders, but dramatically it is slow and uncertain in touch. Parts of it are stilted and forced with consciously *avant-garde* technique, and as such date pitilessly.

The "evil eye" is a vagabond who wanders from village to village and because of his strange *farouche* air brings consternation to the local people who begin to attribute every ensuing evil to his fell power. They chase him—from their houses and byres and market places—till at last he himself believes the superstition and becomes ferocious—playing cruel tricks, harming crops and animals when he can, deliberately frightening children out of their wits. There is no pawky sentimentalising of the picturesque peasant here; the narrow minded cruelty and hardness of superstitious, backward country folk everywhere is shown without mercy.

HE COULD NOT DROWN

At last the *mauvais oeil* is cornered and his evil vitality spent, he tells his tale. A conventional village tale it is, of his getting his sweetheart into trouble and making a suicide pact with her, a pact which fails as the pond is not deep enough to drown them. Coming to the surface they look on each other with hatred and walk away each in a different direction—the girl to face the scolding tongues of the neighbours and produce her child, and the man to take to the road as an outcast from his home driven by a restless devil of unhappiness inside him. Delivered of this tale he dies.

In spite of its faults the film should be shown and appreciated in England as it is a rich and powerful ethnographical document. High spots are the cock fight, the

exorcism of the evil spirit and the harvest festival *kermesse*. Marcel Poot, young Belgian composer beginning to be internationally acclaimed—a work of his was performed recently at a Queen's Hall Prom.—wrote the music.

SOME BELGIAN DOCUMENTARIES

Before this major work Dekeukeleire was responsible for several excellent short documentaries of industrial subjects usually connected with Flemish life. *Le Canal Albert* deals in straightforward fashion with the building of Belgium's latest and biggest waterway. *Chanson de Toile de Lin*, of which there is an English version, is the song of the flax from which the famous Flanders cloth is made. *Le Cuir* is a film on leather and had the effect of increasing the industry's prosperity when it was first shown. Another of Dekeukeleire's films is on wool, and still another on Belgian folk-lore—*Carnavals et Pelerinages*.

Like Dovchenko he is a poet in celluloid; his eye for strange and beautiful images is sensitive to an unusual degree and he feels and can express the essence of natural phenomena—country folk, animals, crops, materials—and make his audience feel it too. But his good qualities are also responsible for his faults. He cannot resist an exquisite sequence of—say peasant life—which has nothing whatever to do with his theme, to the weakening and confusion of the dramatic core of the film. He would be a great director if he could resist such temptations and could tighten up his loose construction.

Henri Strock, Belgium's other important director, is largely without Dekeukeleire's poetic fantasy, but he has the virtues of order and mental grasp with which to discipline and strengthen his great depth of feeling. His films are human, warm and full of indignation for social injustices and bad conditions of living. He is nearer to the English documentary film-makers in this respect, though



Les Taudis

C.E.P.

his approach is different—characteristically Flemish, it is less intellectual and more emotional.

THE KING AT A PREMIÈRE

His film on slum clearance, *Les Taudis* or *Maisons de la Misère*, which was also a first prize winner at the national festival last year, brought the King to its première—an almost unheard-of event. It would be extremely interesting to compare it with Elton's *raportage* on the same subject. Storck's film has a thread of story—the mother desperately sick among the appalling conditions of her overcrowded home; her little girl fetching a neighbour and running for the doctor; her meeting on the way with the landlord who demands his pound of flesh; the mother's death and the pathetic pomp of her funeral, the taking of her to a cemetery of fantastic graves, ex-voto offerings and marble memorials, where in death she is housed so much better than in life. Then comes the order to pull down the slums, and even the children join in and break down one little corner with glee.

Finally comes the propaganda for new houses—the film was sponsored by a housing society—and by this time we are all ardent supporters of any such scheme, so deeply has Storck's film moved us. When it was shown in Paris early this year it actually affected audiences to the extent of the Press and public demanding the speeding up of slum clearance in France. In consequence a new programme has been planned and put into force.

All Storck's films show this social conscience and a sense of the dignity and common humanity of mankind. The few shots of men hopelessly out of work at the beginning of his Van Zeeland propaganda film, *La Nouvelle Belgique*, have the same moving quality which springs from deep sympathy and personal identification. This film had to be made very quickly and largely consists of news-reel cuts and statistics. It starts with the 1934 financial crisis when there were demonstrations in the streets and work came to a standstill. Unlike her prosperous neighbour Holland, Belgium then suffered terribly. Van Zeeland proposed his plan to abandon the Gold Standard and came into power—a measure which undoubtedly saved the country.

NO MILLIONAIRE

Le Borinage, an early film on which Storck collaborated with Joris Ivens, about the Belgian mining district where terrible conditions of life and work once prevailed and where even now women harness themselves and pull the trucks in the mines, showed Storck's qualities of heart and feeling; some of the shots are unforgettable for their sordidness and tragic implications.

But not being a millionaire, Henri Storck has to make films when and where he can, and sponsors cannot often be found for "social conscience" films. His latest film is a post office propaganda one, but he is so out of love with it that he refused to let me see it. Forced to accept a feeble script and worse dialogue from the authorities he is heartily ashamed of his part in it.

Storck's first master was Flaherty whose films he admires greatly. "In 1927," he told me, "I saw *Moana* and was converted. Coming out of the cinema I decided to spend the rest of my life making films—films of real life—and I have not yet been forced on to an office stool, although

the fight to get sponsors and money and still more to make films as I want has been a hard one."

He is a pioneer in his own country. With no Government organisation or school of *cineastes* to support him he has succeeded in interesting Belgium in the possibilities of realist films and of creating not only an appreciative market for them but of finding backers among ministers, politicians and heads of industry.

A SEA-SICK DIRECTOR

His list of films is a long one. In 1929 he made *Images d'Ostende*—an impressionist film of *avant-garde* technique but of great promise and pictorial beauty. In 1930 he boarded a trawler and in spite of constant sea-sickness made *Pêche au Hareng*. Out at sea he had an unexpected thrill. They were poaching in French waters and suddenly a police vessel appeared and steamed up to them. They had to give up every fish of their more than usually fine catch, and the skipper and crew convinced themselves that their passenger had brought them bad luck as they habitually fished in forbidden waters and had never been caught before. He was glad to arrive back at Ostend and escape their black looks and grumbling!

Then came a lifeboat film and later *Thirty-five reportages in Ostende*—impressions of the beach, the crowds, the fairs, the dunes and so on. *La Morte de Venus* and *Un Idylle à la Plage* were essays in short-story film form, and in 1932 he made a film on the wonderful tunnels under Antwerp's wide river, the Schelde. Then came *Easter Island* and *L'Histoire du Soldat Inconnu* before he worked with Jean Vigo on *Zéro de Conduite*. *Trois vies et une corde* was an Alpine climbing film made in the same year as *Le Borinage*—a contrast of mountains and clean white snow and ice, and coal mines with darkness and black houses. These came before the Van Zeeland film and before he joined C.E.P. to make travel shorts for commercial world distribution—*Les Carillons*, *Regard sur la Belgique Historique*, *Jeux de l'été et de la Mer*, etc.

A CONGO FILM?

What will he do next? He is too good for tourist and travel shorts and his particular genius for putting people on the screen should be cultivated. There is talk of a comprehensive Belgian folk-lore film for the New York World's Fair with Storck as director, and more exciting still a full-length film on the Congo to be made next year.

A few final words on film activities in Belgium. Two years ago the Socialist Party made a propaganda film which was shown everywhere in Socialist cinemas and clubs and taken round on travelling vans at election time. The Socialist Deputies Vandervelde and De Man expounded the propaganda and the pictorial side was cleverly built up from shots of public works, news-reels and statistics. This sounds dry fare, but surprisingly it was not; chiefly because the tone was one of satire and not of pompous demagoguery. Finally, following the French example, a *Cinemathèque* was founded a few months ago in which not only films but also all books written on the cinema are to be collected.

(I should like to express my thanks to Mm. Storck and Dekeukeleire for screening their films for my benefit, and to Mm. René Jauniaux, film editor in chief of *Le Peuple*, and André Thirifays for their valuable information and help.)



THEY MADE THE LAND

Can Poetry and visual music ever be combined? They are attempting it in some of the new documentaries, and we print one of the latest commentaries below. The photographs are from the film and are published by courtesy of Gaumont British Instructional Ltd.

THE FIRST "ROMANTIC" commentary for an English film was composed by Walter Creighton in 1929 to accompany his film of South Africa entitled *Southern April*. This was, in fact, an exquisite piece of work but was too much in advance of its time to be acceptable to distributors who demanded something more popular. To Creighton, however, must be given the credit for being the first to compose prose with a cadence to fit the movement both of his scenes and of his cutting.

Various experiments in rhythmic prose and poetry were subsequently tried, notably in some of the early

Secrets of Life, and more recently, in *Night Mail* and *From Cover to Cover*. The latest commentary of the "romantic" type is the one accompanying the film sponsored by the Scottish Film Council *They Made the Land*. Composed like the early jongleur romances, this commentary moves from prose to verse, as the matter of the film changes. Without its accompanying pictures, much of the value of the cadence and of the changing rhythms and accents is lost, but the material is of interest to students of film technique, especially in view of the recent theatrical success of the America documentary *The River*.

PART ONE

*The farming lands of Scotland.
Sheltered houses
Waving corn
The fields climbing the hillsides
Scotland to-day,
Wrested by man's faith and toil from the land that Nature
made.
Craggy hillside
Rough turf and heather
Peat bogs
Rain soaked valleys.*

In the wet valleys, on the rocky crags, no crops could be grown, so three hundred years ago the farmers of Scotland tried to till the hillsides, tried to turn over the land on the hillsides that were so steep that a foot-plough was the only tool that they could use. Scottish farmers in remote districts still use it; the blade made from the trunk of a tree, the handle a bough in one piece with the blade.

And where the ground was less steep, they made simple wooden ploughs. The blacksmith strengthened them with

metal, these wooden ploughs of three hundred years ago. They were pulled by a yoke of oxen that moved slowly across the fields. Hard work for beast and man, and only shallow furrows to show for it, only the surface of the ground barely scraped by it, the surface still covered by rocks and stones where the thistle, fit emblem for old Scotland, took root and grew.

Only the mountain sheep could find enough to eat on the poor hillside grazing.

*Mountain sheep that were sure-footed and small.
But for the cattle there was hardly grass to keep them alive in summer.*

*There was no grass to make hay to feed them in winter.
In winter the cattle were kept in the stone-built byres.
And when spring came—the farmer sent for a neighbour
A neighbour to help him lift out his starving cattle,
His beasts that had starved through days and months of winter.
They were too weak when the days of spring came
Too weak to walk out alone to the hillsides.
These were the "lifting" days.*

Food for the land was scarce
And farmyard manure was precious.
It was carried out in creels by the farmer's wife and his daughter.

The cattle could not be spared in springtime to do this field-work.
So the women of Scotland toiled to tend the land.
This land was so bitter; and what it gave it gave so grudgingly.
Peopled with a sturdy race . . . with strong, handsome women and vigorous men, their life was an unending struggle to wrest from the earth the fruits that the earth owed them.
Longingly the Scots looked south, looked towards Europe and England.
They sent inquiries to Europe
They tried to find out new ways to till the land.

Yes, the Scots looked south . . . across the border to that other land that in those days was another country.

*And over two hundred years ago
In Seventeen hundred and seven
On the parchment rolls of Parliament
The sovereign signed her name to the Act of Union
To the Act for the Union of the Kingdoms of England and Scotland.*

*And now Scottish farmers sent out their inquiries
Brought back new ideas and new crops
From Europe and England as well;
New tools,
The all-iron plough.
New crops, potatoes and turnip seed,
New ways of tilling the fields—above all new ways of draining the ground.
The farmers began in earnest to drain the rain-soaked valleys,
With new courage based on new knowledge.*

*Two hundred years ago
The farmers attacked the land.
First they took the turfs the spade had turned over
And laid them at the bottom of a ditch
Below was a channel down which the water could drain
Away from the rain-sodden ground in the valley.
Then the ditch was filled in and with this turf-draining
Acres of land were drained dry.*

*Next they learned to lay bundles of sticks in the ditches
And trod them well down in the earth:
Then they put stones in the ditches,
So that the water could trickle through.
Soon they shaped the stones making a simple tunnel;
And then came tiles—and so the land was drained.
And the spades drove into the dry land.
The land of the Lothians and Ayr,
Of Aberdeen, Angus and Perth,
Of the Border, the West and the North.*

*But sometimes the spade struck peat
Peat that covered the valleys
Peat that was nine feet deep—peat that had to be cut away from the surface.
Away from acres of ground that was lying buried beneath it.
Patiently, methodically*



*They cut the peat
They piled the peat.
They carried it away.
They stacked it up to dry.
To dry and burn for fuel.*

*The crofter cleared his half-acre
The landowner cleared his hundred acres.
Patiently, methodically
The work of clearing went on
Until they reached a layer of stones.
The soil at last.*

*Now for the iron plough
And a horse to help to pull the plough
Only one horse on a little farm, yoked with an ox.
This strange team, this iron plough, drew deep furrows over the land.
The new land which the farmers themselves had drained and reclaimed.*

*Every inch of the land was precious
They ploughed to the very base of the rocks in the valleys.
They picked up stones that lay in the furrows
Painstakingly picked up stones and built them into dykes.
Great dykes with a foot-path running along the top.*

*And beyond them the grain grew in the new made fields.
The fields of Ayr and of Moray, Dumfries, Aberdeen and Kinross.
The Scottish fields.
And on Scottish farms there were building to house the new crops
Beasts to feed on the new crops
Little stacks of hay and of corn.*

*They weighted the stacks with stones for the wind blew down
the valleys.
The wind blew over the crops in the new-made fields
The wind blew over the crops and beat them down.*

*By the sea coasts the wind brought greater destruction
Blowing the sand from the shore until it covered the farm
lands
On the Moray coast a parish was covered with sea-sand.
Dunes on the Moray coast that were once a farm and its
buildings.
The sand and the wind threatened the new-made fields
What could protect the fields?*

PART TWO

*They gathered cones from the trees
And out of the cones took the seeds
They planted them in the valleys
To grow into trees.*

*They dug them up when they grew
Into sacks they loaded the saplings
And carried them up the bare bleak hillsides
Where the Scottish forests once stood.
They planted them on the hillsides
Round the fallen trees of the forests
To shelter the valley beyond.*

*And on the dunes where the sand lay drifting
They planted young trees among brushwood,
Laid down, to keep the sand from the young trees
Until they had taken root.*

*And they took root and grew in the sand on the hillsides
Adding a ring of branches each year as they flourished.
Till they stood tall and high defying the tempests
Clothing the hillsides, protecting the valleys
In Nairn, in Moray, at Darnaway, at Dunkeld.
Dividing the fields, and breaking the force of the weather.*

Now grew up the prosperous Scottish farms of a hundred years ago, farms so big they were more like villages than farm buildings; built strongly of stone and tiles, busy with the coming and going of men and beasts and poultry. Still the Scots used the farming ways of their forefathers. Each year they rounded up their sheep. Each sheep was pinioned in a hurdle, and painstakingly the shepherds divided the fleece and daubed the skin with tar and butter. This was to keep off parasites and, to-day, old shepherds still vow it is better than sheep dips. True it is that huge flocks fed in the pastures and as for the crops garnered from the fields, one hundred years ago it was said "In the country of Haddington I saw . . . such rickyards as never were seen in any country upon earth." He saw them in Scotland where the farmers had won every inch of the farming land and held it against the force of nature.

And now, a hundred years ago, the fields were so large that farmers in Angus began to use machinery to till them. This reaper was once a very modern thing, when it replaced handcutting which was too slow for the huge harvests.

*Once great woods had covered the hillsides of Scotland
Forests of pine and of oak, with strong roots defying the
tempests.
Now, most of the trees had decayed, many were cut for timber
Many had died and fallen and no one replaced the fallen.*

*So the Scottish farmers looked at their bleak, bare hillsides
Looked at birch trees bending in the wind.
At valleys down which the wind came rushing
At wind-blown pines.*

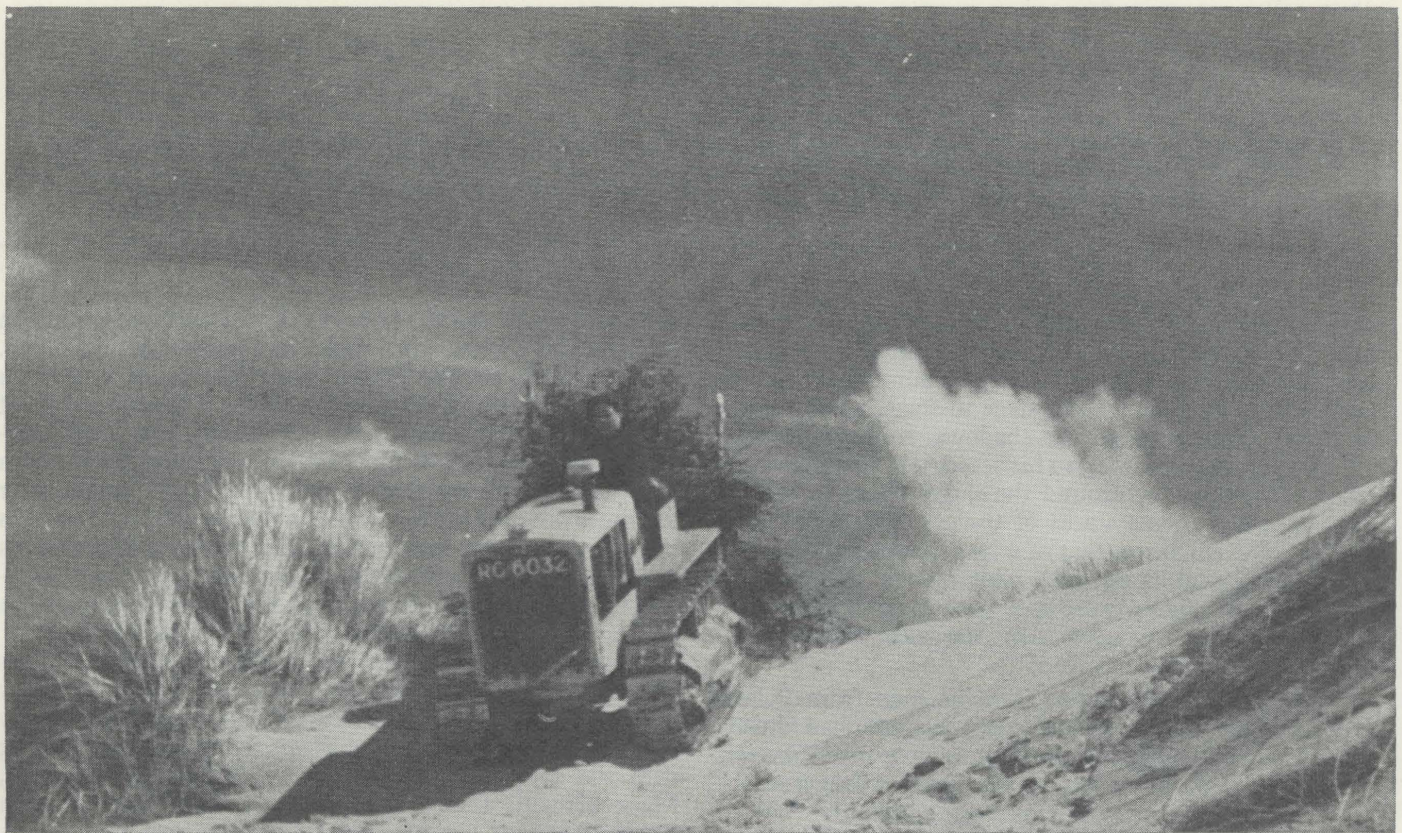
*There were no trees to stop the rushing of the strong winds
So one hundred and fifty years ago, to save their fields,
The farmers of Scotland replanted the forests.*

*In autumn and springtime the shadow of the team fell across
the plough-land.
A team of strong Clydesdales pulling the iron plough
And the nineteenth-century ploughman ploughed the straight
furrows.
For which Scottish farmers were famous.
For still they learnt from their fathers and from their grand-
fathers,
That every foot of earth had been won with courage and
labour,
So they ploughed to the edge of the reclaimed lands—
They fitted their furrows to the shape of the fields
And not a foot of the soil was wasted.*

*In the fields the crops grew down to the very edge of bogs that
were too deep to drain.
In rocky land the fields climbed to the very edge of the rock.
And every generation of Scottish farmers learned the lesson
early.
The land has been won by courage and labour.
Every foot is precious
Every foot must be cared for.*

*Already the Scottish crops were famous
The long drills of turnips in Lothian.
The great fields of potatoes in Ayrshire
Cornlands of the Lothians, Clackmannan and Stirling.
Wheat
Barley
Oats
The crops of Scotland were famous in Europe
There was food for men and there was food for cattle
Food for cattle:
To this small farm of Sittyton in Aberdeenshire
Amos Cruikshank brought a queer looking bull from England
And from it he bred his herd of Aberdeen shorthorns.
A typical bull from the Sittyton herd of shorthorns.
This breed planted American plains with cattle
Made the foundation of the Argentine beef-trade.
Weighted groaning sideboards with the roast beef of Old
England.*

*Here at Tillyfour
McCombie "menace to vegetarians"
Bred his famous black Aberdeen Angus cattle
Cattle for Russia, for Australia, for Canada
More beef for the world.*



*Ayrshire long-horned cattle
As fine a dairy breed as any
Grazed on the fertile pastures of South-West Scotland
At milking time filed meekly into the byres
Of the white-washed farms of Ayr.*

But toiling early and late could not prevent disaster. Sometimes the beasts fell sick, sometimes the crops would wither. So the Scottish farmers called on science to help them. Called twentieth-century science to help in their battle with nature.

So the great Scottish agricultural research stations came into being.

Moredun, where scientists search for the cause of diseases among cattle—not only in the laboratory, but out in the fields working side by side with the farmers, a tent their field laboratory.

Rowett, where they search for the right diet for all kinds of stock in all kinds of conditions.

Hannah, where among other activities, they produce the foods recommended by Rowett; grass cut early, dried artificially and chopped into a green powder which is more nutritious than hay.

The Institute of Animal Genetics where they carry out experiments to help farmers breed the kind of stock they need. Already by injecting a substance into an egg they can determine the sex of the chicken that will hatch out. They can change the sex of a chicken. This bird, that looks like a cock, is really a hen. It has the light plumage of a hen and the dark feathers of a cock as well.

And, as the land is the basis of all farming, here at Macaulay they research into problems of the land. They take a sample from the farmer's field and in the open-air laboratory, feed it with different fertilisers. The fertiliser

used at the extreme left is the one that this soil needs, for the grain grows high.

And under the supervision of the Macaulay Institute, experiments are made into draining on a large scale. In Lanarkshire, the great peat bog at Carnwath is being reclaimed. Two hundred years ago, a single farmer tackled his own peat-covered land with a couple of spades. To-day, they make drains of wood, for peat preserves wood, and drains the land on a vast scale. Huge tractors are brought in to help in its cultivation and here the scheme is in operation, land being drained, land reclaimed, land under cultivation. Vast schemes for land reclamation; under the Institute of Forestry vast schemes of afforestation, millions of young trees being raised in a single forestry nursery every year. Over the sandy wastes roar caterpillar tractors, bringing up brushwood that men may lay it on the dunes and plant trees and yet more trees to hold back the sand. Now, too, they plant marrum grass where the sand has covered the farm lands, coarse grass whose roots shall knot together and hold the drifting sand.

*Sons, grandsons, great-grandsons of the old Scottish farmers
Of the men and the women who won back the land for Scotland
Scots to-day face their age-old enemies
The bog, the peat and the heather,
They are waiting—
Waiting to seize again the farmlands of Scotland,
Held off and defeated by man's faith and courage.
By the faith and courage that has wrought from the dour land
that nature made
The fields climbing the hillside
The waving crops
Garbed crops
Sheltered crofts and steadings
The farming lands of Scotland.*

THE LAMENT

of PAUL ROTH, who, in reviewing a new book below, cries out that "there has seldom been less hope for the future as far as the great mass of story-films is concerned"

WHEN READING this new *History of the Motion Pictures*,* which Iris Barry has now translated from the French, I had reason one day to be in an English film studio. It was deathly quiet. As I went from stage to stage, an occasional lone figure emerged from the shadows, rubbed the sleep from his eyes, and returned to his secret job. Expensive but unused equipment lay around the dusty floor. In subterranean property-rooms stacks of useless junk grew heavy with dirt. The smell was that of a long-unopened furniture store. Dressing-table mirrors, which once reflected the faces of famous names, were grey with dust. A time-clock stood unpunched. I opened MM. Bardèche's and Brasillach's massive history and read:

"Itinerant carpet-vendors, strange men from Poland and Rumania, adventurers of every sort who had already gained partial control of the cinema now made matters worse by methods which would have endangered the future of any industry and which orientated the whole of production, but particularly that of France, towards a permanent mediocrity. This aspect of film history has been referred to before; if we are to regard the film as an independent art and trace its gradual evolution, we must never lose sight of the fact that it has so far been primarily an industry, and often the basest of them all."

For my own part, I added, "But the difference between this industry and the others is that in the others they put the crooks in gaol."

The miracle of it all is that we go on believing something will happen. Bardèche and Brasillach wrote their book in 1936. Since then, partly due to a shift in political power, the French film has been reborn. In Britain, we have had an abortive Films Bill. But we still go on believing.

One day the real history of the motion pictures will be written. It will evaluate the whole social and economic background from which the movie stems. It will be a funeral *cortège* of tragedies. It will be the story of brave, patient, creative men who fought an industrial and financial system because they believed in the right to create in the most aesthetically difficult and most economically warped of all invented mediums.

Without trying to analyse in detail the causes, Bardèche and Brasillach tell a sad story of broken spirits. In this book you will find the story of the Swedes, of Griffith, Lupu Pick, Charles Ray, Mauritz Stiller, Jean Vigo, von Stroheim, Sjöström and the others who have disappeared. The authors sum it up when writing of Jean Epstein:

"Alas, in the years to come he often gave the lie to such predictions; it was a crime to be reckoned against the cinema that it made so gifted a man into what he now is."

Do not the names of Pabst, Clair, Milestone and a score of

others come to mind? And yet the authors are wrong in blaming the cinema; they mean its commercial exploiters.

Not a little of the book's value lies in Miss Barry's efficient editorial work. She has done a laborious job of translating with distinction, a job which included the identification of hundreds of films shown in France under titles different from those used in their country of origin. Her footnotes not only act as a brake on the authors' enthusiasms but put right many inaccuracies. Her choice of illustrations is excellent. There are thirty of them and two comprehensive indexes. As a result, the book is far more important in its English-American version than in its original form.

What a record it is! From 1895 to the end of Miss Barry's editorial postscript written this year, the book is a survey of films made, of creative energy spent and of money invested. Its chief value is, perhaps, in its chapters dealing with the early developments: with Méliès, Max Linder, Mack Sennett, Ince and Griffith. It is specially good in its assessment of pre-War and immediate post-War events in Europe, its summary of early Italian and French films, its appreciative criticism of the all-too-neglected Swedish school ("It was Sweden," they wrote, "which first made the world realise that there really is an art of the motion picture and that it is worthy of respect"), its emphasis on the theories and writings of Louis Delluc (despite such a mistaken prophecy as "I prophesy . . . we shall see in the future if I am right . . . that France has no more aptitude for the cinema than for music"), its admirable analysis of such difficult figures as Abel Gance, Marcel l'Herbier, Asta Nielsen and Jacques Feyder. It is extremely good on Clair, probably the most accurate estimate as yet. On the other hand, it is totally inadequate on the German cinema. It lists the films but the assessment is far from agreeing with what others have written. Why this shoddy recognition of Pabst, with his films taken out of their order; this complete omission of Karl Meyer, Fritz Wendhausen and von Gerlach; and the failure to recognise that it was the influence of writing and not painting which made the German school important? Why a detailed appreciation of *Maedchen in Uniform* and a dismissal of *Zéro de Conduite* in a couple of lines? And why the silence about British films? There were, after all, such people as George Pearson, Betty Balfour, Cecil Hepworth and Henry Edwards.

Omissions are inevitable in a book of this scope, but I am surprised at Miss Barry letting through such errors as Paul Wegener being a "new figure" in 1918 when he had made at least one film before the war, a "dissolve" being described wrongly on page 21, and "diffforming" instead of "distorting" lenses. But the book has many entertaining things worth repeating. For example, an early Swedish film, *The Emigrant*, directed by Muck Linden, included a rape scene. Censorship already existed. The banned portion was replaced by a sub-title, "Interval of Two Minutes." It caused a sensation. And again: before the war, Anatole

**The History of Motion Pictures*. Bardèche and Brasillach: translated by Iris Barry. George Allen and Unwin. 18s.

France was asked by the producers to see the screen version of *The Red Lily*. When the film was over, France was full of admiration and praise. "How very interesting," he said, "how really extraordinary!" And then he added quietly, "But are you quite sure that it is really *The Red Lily*?"

What remains? That provocative paragraph which sums up the section called "The Classic Era of the Silent Film." It is this:

"Even to-day it is questionable whether it is possible to love the film sincerely unless one knew it in the silent days, in those last years which are inseparable from the days of one's youth. The Germans, the Russians, the French, the Americans and the Swedes had etched unforgettable shadows on the screen. They had robbed the sunlight of its brightness and the shadow of its secrets. The faces of men and women had learned to be expressive in those mute dramas by the aid of no more than an eyelid, the flicker of a glance, or a shadowy flush which mantled their cheeks. We demanded emotions and dreams, passion and suffering of them, and felt no need for words. There were quite ordinary films in which the extinguishing of a lamp at some window, a figure emerging from the mist pale and formless as a drowned body, the bend of a river revealing a road between two rows of trees, furnished us with that unique sensation of shock which a glimpse of an unknown world provides. Those actors, so well adapted to express subtleties, those plots which were of necessity so clear and brief, may all be forgotten in the future. But we who witnessed the birth of an art may possibly also have seen it die. Recalling all that it promised, we are left with the melancholy regret one feels for a thing foredoomed."

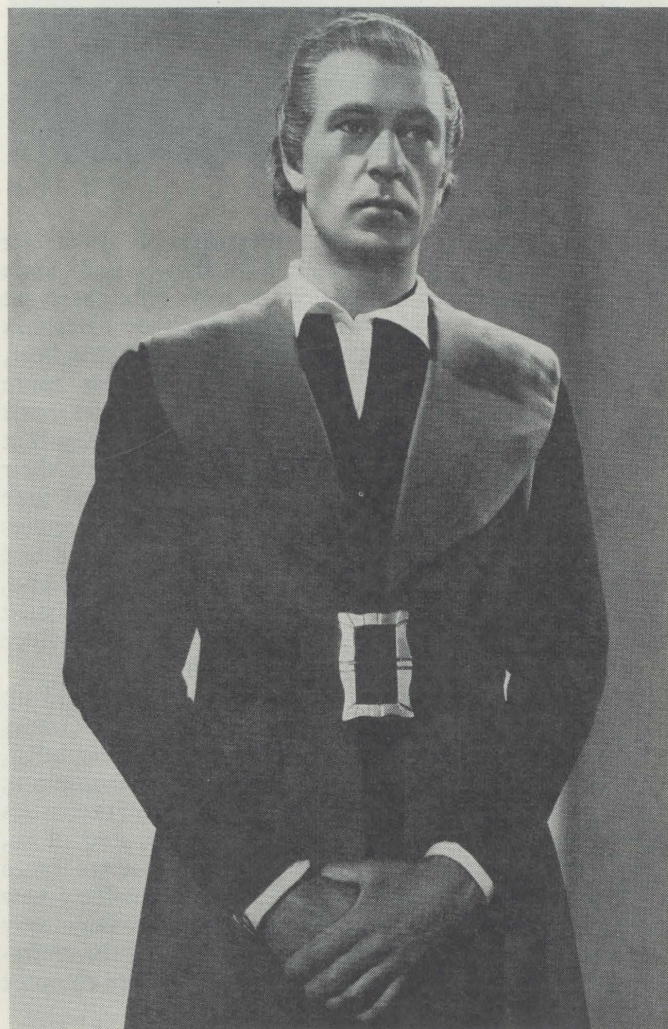
To which Miss Barry replies in her postscript:

"During the past three years, as often during the previous forty, the film has been declared moribund and also said to be still in its infancy, while audiences in increasing numbers have gathered in cinemas and there enjoyed themselves. The film everywhere has meanwhile continued, as before, to draw heavily upon the stage and fiction, upon biography, history and musical comedy as well as upon contemporary occurrences, but in all of its products it has inevitably continued to reflect contemporary judgments and opinions, and it has also created much that is spontaneous and original. . . . Technically, the film has always been somewhat in advance of its ability to harness new technical resources to the expression of more penetrating, funnier, or more significant subject matter than it has utilised at any given moment. This has never been truer than at the moment of writing and, in consequence, there has never been more hope for the future."

Contrary to Miss Barry, I suggest there has seldom been less hope for the future as far as the great mass of story-films is concerned. With the authors I agree that we have lost much since the coming of speech to the cinema. Not all the cracks in *A Slight Case of Murder*, nor all the facial contortions in *The Vessel of Wrath*, nor all the adventures of *Marco Polo*, nor all the misrepresentations in *Emile Zola*, nor all the craziness of *Nothing Sacred* can replace for me the visual poetry of the Swedes, the epic sweep of the Russians or the grim humanity of the Germans in that decade following the war. There are critics who say that this doesn't matter, that a film is a thing to be seen, enjoyed and then forgotten. But is this attitude appreciative, let

alone courteous, to the years of creative energy which men like Sjöström and Pabst, Pudovkin and Dovjenco, have put into their films? Sound has brought much to the film but it has brought no more than has been lost. We cannot go back. A silent film is a thing for a museum, provided that that museum sees full educative use is made of it. What matters is how can we regain that lost visual sense (and I do not mean just good photography because that we have got) when the opportunities for creative production grow fewer? That is where I cannot share Miss Barry's optimism for the future, why I cannot understand her omission to point out that the achievements of the last few years, of which she is rightly proud have come about *in spite of* and not because of the intentions of the industry.

It is Sunday night, and it is raining. Across the road the neon sign shines red. It invites me to see *Love is a Headache* supported by *Mr. Moto Takes a Chance*. Is that the art of the motion picture for which Stiller, Pick, Wiene, Murnau, Vigo, von Gerlach and the others worked when they were alive? It is not. But it is one of the reasons why the creative minds in the film world to-day do not follow accepted channels but are intent on building a world of their own where creative freedom is still respected; respected at boundaries of a concentration camp.



Marco Polo

United Artists

"Nor all the Adventures of Marco Polo"



Fanny Elssler

U.F.A. Film

WHENEVER I HAVE heard the suitability of ballet for filming purposes being discussed it is always as if some preposterous scheme is being investigated. First there are those who pillory the idea with such film trade clichés as lack of appeal, bad box-office and the high-brow bugbear, and then there are those whose objections seem more reasonable when they assert that technical difficulties merit that film producers keep their distance from anything that concerns the *balletomane*. Actually both sides have their grains of truth, but only when that almost mythical time will arrive when many of the assessments of film prophets and producers will cease to go off like damp squibs and expensive experiments in lavishness will come to an end, can stones be cast by the "guiltless". Meanwhile ballet deserves serious consideration by serious film people, since film dynamics can absorb almost any art-form.

Ballet in its present form, however, which is linked up with its stage tradition from the times of the ancient Greeks and Romans to the elaborate artistic creations of Diaghileff, can be of little use to the film medium. On this assumption, then, it is necessary to consider whether the art of orchestrics can ever have a progressive cinematic future, and, if so, what methods can be adopted to change and develop it into suitable material for filming purposes. This calls for a new perspective in the treatment of ballet, in the same way that an adjustment of outlook is demanded from the craftsman of the theatre when confronted with the more complex material provided by the cinema.

THE "CINEMATIC" BALLET

More as a postulation than anything else, one can now submit that the cinematic ballet, if it can emerge, should

THE SCREEN AND THE BALLET

"The cinema is like a reservoir, breaking down the restrictions and limitations which have so far gripped many art forms," states H. L. PERKOFF in this controversial article.

seek for a peculiarity and texture rather similar to that of the film cartoon. This may be anathema to some ballet purists, but their objections would be necessarily biased. Further, the film ballet must ally itself at the outset with the many film devices that make for fantasy while enlisting human aid for the actual dancing.

Acknowledging one's indebtedness to Disney for his scheme of approach to the spirit of fantasy and for many technical points which he has even now perfected in his *Silly Symphonies*, one can proceed to theorise without having a conscience at trying to steal the exclusive *Silly Symphony* thunder at any particular juncture.

COLOUR

Despite Walter Wanger's statement that "by the beginning of 1939 all important films will be produced in colour, and a black-and-white feature will be as archaic as a silent one", the use of colour for all full-length films is still a controversial matter. One cannot say the same about colour as used in the cartoon film; without colour this attractive medium would now appear incomplete and artistically unsatisfying. For it is precisely colour which aids and enhances throughout the fantasy that is needed in the cartoon film. The same principle can now be tentatively applied to the film ballet form. Here colour could be used to its best advantage, giving atmosphere and background to the function of the poetry of movement in its photographic statement. (A good but not very appropriate example of how colour fits in with the scheme of dance movement can be found in the short film *La Cucaracha*. This can hardly be placed in the same category as the ballet form, but in any case film ballet having passed through a process of adaptation will be closer to such a film than the stage presentation of a ballet.)

SHORTNESS A NECESSITY

What is equally as important as colour is that the ballet film, as a complete entity and not used as a sequence in

an ordinary fiction film, must be preferably short in the manner of cartoon films. And if the ballet film is to achieve a status anything like the cartoon film, or even a definite recognition as something significant and ultimately necessary in film entertainment, it must supply the ingredients of story value and general appeal. Even with the demarcation between the highbrow and lowbrow, there still seems to exist some almost miraculous method of bridging this difference of taste. Disney has proved it most admirably; Capra has made a brave attempt at doing so and has partially succeeded. Such men have somehow learnt the secret of "general appeal" which is nothing but a mutual paradise for film financier and cinema-goer.

It is often possible that if the synopsis of a ballet is not read before witnessing its presentation, its superficial meaning which in this case does not touch upon the emotions will be lost or at least very vague. This can be tolerated on the grounds that the æsthetic values attached to pantomime must not be interfered with. But this cannot hold good in films, and the use of the chorus as a factor which will solve this problem must be introduced. We know how in the *Silly Symphonies* and some other cartoon films, off-screen choruses sometimes announce the theme of the story and give a certain intellectual content to what is going to be seen. Sometimes when there are crowds, the choruses cease to be off-screen and are taken over by the actual figures projected on to the screen.

"CHORUS OFF"

If similar technical methods are applied to the short

ballet film, will it mean that each dancer will also have to be a trained singer? Not necessarily. The off-screen choruses could be used to unfold the entire story of the ballet, but this need not exclude the possible interruption of pure pantomime by singing from the *corps de ballet*. This can only be a matter of conjecture at the moment, since the best solution as to the ratio of the singing voice in co-operation with the poetry of movement, can be found only in the actual experiment and making of such films.

THE FUTURE

Ballet is conceived on a static plane at present; cinema with the aid of trick-photography, cutting and a specialised technique, would broaden its scope and appeal. The same skill that Hollywood applies in presenting the contrapuntal nature of a quick-moving gangster film, could just as well be applied in the adaptation for the screen of many well-known ballets. As for the danger of evoking shudders from ballet-fans and making the pioneers of ballet turn in their graves, it is best to point out that the cinema is like a reservoir, breaking down the restrictions and limitations which have so far gripped many art forms.

In the development of art as well as other expressions of the human spirit, we move always nearer to synthesis on a higher level. Thus we can look back at the ancient Cretans, Spartans and other Dorians who used the primitive chorus as the accompaniment and message behind their music and dancing, and now contemplate an analogous form of expression which will in time find its way into the modern cinema.



Fanny Elssler

U.F.A. Film

THE AMERICAN DOCUMENTARY

is at last finding its feet, according to EZRA GOODMAN

THE DOCUMENTARY movement in the United States is currently on the upswing, and there are signs that the coming year will be a memorable one.

This country has never developed a full-fledged documentary film movement of its own. True, there have been the seeds of such a trend in certain Hollywood fiction films. Such pictures as *The Birth of a Nation*, *The Iron Horse*, *The Covered Wagon*, and *Cimarron* drew upon the vast, untouched storehouse of earthy, everyday American existence in a vital and sincere fashion. It was primarily in this genre of Western pictures that most fictional documentary efforts have fallen. Even to-day, occasional pictures such as *Slim* and *Gold is Where You Find It* contain much of genuine documentary value.

Otherwise, America's documentary producers have roved abroad. Schoedsack and Cooper went to Asia and Africa for *Grass* and *Chang*. Flaherty went to Alaska, the South Seas, Aran and India. Van Dyke, in his earlier films, explored the North and the Tropics. Paul Strand and Stacey Woodard created *The Wave* and *The Adventures of Chico* in Mexico. But there was no whole-hearted and forthright approach to the tremendous fund of domestic American life that has scarcely been touched upon by Hollywood.

Whatever documentary tendency the Hollywood studios showed some time ago has now been dissipated. The studio has become the foundation of motion-picture production. Process shots, multiple exposures and the various facets of trick work have superseded natural backgrounds. Hollywood contends that it is too laborious and expensive to send large companies out on location, where valuable time is subject to whims of the weather. And so even such "outdoor" epics as *Sequoia* and *The Bad Man of Brimstone* are photographed almost entirely in studios.

And although studio work is not necessarily fatal to a documentary (Pabst did much of his famous *Kameradschaft* in a studio), nevertheless studio production is not conducive to a genuine documentary approach. The studio is removed from reality, and it is upon everyday reality that the documentary film thrives, bending it to more creative uses.

It has, therefore, remained for a few independent producers outside of Hollywood to accomplish anything in this field. The impetus to a new interest came when Paul Rotha arrived here last year with a number of British documentary films, such as *The Smoke Menace*, *Housing Problems*, *Night Mail*, etc. Much had been said and written about the British documentary movement, but with the exception of *Drifters* and *Song of Ceylon*—both impressionistic in technique—no English documentaries had been seen here.

This new group of films—most of them realistic, sometimes grimly so—aroused great interest here. They were presented before large audiences by the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, Columbia University and the New School for Social Research, exciting widespread journalistic comment as well.

Until that time, only one purely documentary film had received much attention, *The Plow that Broke the Plains*, a study of aridity in the mid-Western dust bowl area, produced by Pare Lorentz, a former motion picture critic and head of the Documentary Films Section of the Federal Resettlement Administration.

Lorentz's second film, *The River*, also Government-produced, aroused a storm of comment, unanimously favourable. Released early this year, *The River* was a two-reel study of flood control and the result of an unusual collaboration of outstanding artists. It was written and directed by Lorentz; photographed by Stacy Woodard, Floyd Crosby and Willard Van Dyke, all prominent cameramen; the music was composed by Virgil Thomson and played by the Philharmonic Society Orchestra under the direction of Alexander Smallens. The narration was spoken by Thomas Chalmers, the opera singer, and the picture was edited by Lloyd Nosler of the Samuel Goldwyn studio.

The advance praise of such critics as Gilbert Seldes and Meyer Levin, led Paramount to take over distribution of *The River*, which was given to theatres without pay. To date, *The River* has played in thousands of motion-picture houses and is still being shown successfully throughout the land.

It is noteworthy that both *The Plow that Broke the Plains* and *The River* were Government sponsored, just as many of the British documentaries are. So were many other films, such as Ralph Steiner's *Hands*, produced for the Works Progress Administration. *The Wave* was produced for the Mexican Government. It would appear, therefore, that the documentary flourishes well under group sponsorship.

A great problem of documentary producers has been that of distribution. It is difficult to find theatres to play these films, even when there is no rental attached to them. The double-feature crowds out many short subjects, and theatres usually restrict themselves to newsreels or cartoons. There is an indication, however, that the double-feature, which is under violent attack everywhere, will give way soon to a single film surrounded by a group of selected short subjects. Short subject production is improving in quality, while the Brandt theatres in New York have announced that they are dropping the double-feature and returning to the single standard. *The River* has conclusively proved that a good documentary, given an opportunity of release, will rapidly find a wide audience.

At this writing, Pare Lorentz is planning his next film. Frontier Films, a left-wing organisation, has already completed *The People of the Cumberland*, a study of living and working conditions among Tennessee residents. A new screen firm, known as American Documentary Films, Inc., which plans to produce films interpreting current achievements and problems in science, industry, agriculture, education and government for both commercial and non-commercial distribution, has also been announced.



Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars

G.F.D.

MIXED BAG

ALAN PAGE *reviews the Entertainment Films*

THE RECENT DEATH of Pearl White must have stirred up many memories in the minds of the older faithfuls among the film public. Week after week the Serial Queen set our hearts fluttering as first she was rescued from the appalling danger in which she had been left at the end of the previous instalment and then trapped by some new peril from which rescue seemed well-nigh impossible. But rescued she would be and next week we, the faithful, would be there to see how it was brought about.

Those were unsophisticated days, when the cinema was still so much of a novelty that we were prepared to be indulgent over its crudities. The miracle was that the pictures moved and movement, in terms of violent action, was the first essential. It was at once discovered that the action could most effectively be divided into three categories—thrills, laughter and tears. This division still holds good, but with the advance towards technical perfection it has become less sharp. The thrills, the laughter and the tears are more often than not all mixed up together, while speech has enabled the actors to develop subtleties of character undreamed of in the early days.

The serial still flourishes. Even now Flash Gordon, in 15 episodes, is fighting Ming, the Mighty Emperor of Mongo, all over the plains of Mars. But it seems to me that the strongest evidence of the survival of the serial can be

found in the Charlie Chan films, the Mr. Moto adventures and the Judge Hardy family album. The only difference between the exploits of Elaine and these series is that the latter are complete full-length features and you don't have to come back next week to see how they will end.

There was a new Judge Hardy instalment last quarter, *Love Finds Andy Hardy*. All the old faces were in it and some new ones, too. Master Mickey Rooney had to grapple with the problem of whether he should take Judy Garland, Lana Turner or Ann Rutherford to the Christmas dance, a terrible decision for one lately arrived in the teens and the complications of love, to have to make. Artfully woven round this centre were various bits of business for Andy's father, mother and sister, the whole adding up to another comfortable cautionary tale of the average American family. But thanks to an understanding script and Mickey Rooney it reached what the trade call the higher brackets. It is amazing to see the way a boy so young as Rooney has learned all those tricks of screen acting which his elders and betters have frequently spent long years in mastering.

Much nearer to the old serial traditions was *The Saint in New York*. This was announced as being the first of a new series featuring the hairbreadth escapes of a Robin Hood gangster figure called the Saint. Not even the slick performance of Louis Hayward as the Saint could save the

film from being the crudest nonsense. The only point of interest was the way in which it fell naturally into serial divisions of some half dozen climaxes.

The gentleman known as the Thin Man is having a good innings. Actually this term has now come to cover the type of detective who tracks down murderers with a gun in one hand and a highball in the other, a flow of wisecracks and an understanding wife, just as Baron Frankenstein lent his name to the monster he created. Now a British thin man, or rather Nick Charles, has appeared in *This Man is News*. The film was a faithful-even-unto-death copy of its American prototype, but in spite of breakneck direction and the rich comedy of Alastair Sim—Scotland's gift to British film studios—the fact remained that Barry K. Barnes was no William Powell and Valerie Hobson quite definitely no Myrna Loy. Which does not mean to say that Mr. Barnes and Miss Hobson are not excellent as themselves.

I should make it clear that *This Man is News* was not literally a remake of *The Thin Man*. An avowed remake was, however, *Algiers*, the American version of *Pépé le Moko*. It looked suspiciously as though the same script had been used for both films, for with one exception the American film was a shot for shot copy of the French original. Certainly *Algiers* came within an inch of being the first entirely satisfactory "French" Hollywood production. What, then, was lacking? Could it have been Charles Boyer? No, if anything he was better than Jean Gabin. Hedy Lamarr? No, though quite different from Mireille Balin, she was just as good. Joseph Calleia, Sigrid Gurie and the rest were all excellent. The sets and atmosphere were everything one could have wished—and yet that inch remained. The dialogue was first-rate but, ah! it was not in French.

We had reason to be grateful to the French studios last quarter on several counts. They provided Hollywood with a new star, Danielle Darrieux, and Denham with practically a ready-made film, *Prison Without Bars*. The Darrieux début was such an unquestionable success—the vehicle was *The Rage of Paris*—that a rival London cinema immediately revived *Mayerling*. Thus those who were interested could go from one film to the other and see how cleverly Miss Darrieux had adapted herself to the Hollywood conventions. They could also see how well director Henry Koster understood his star, and while putting her through the paces of American crazy comedy, had allowed her to keep on thinking in French. But then Koster is a director out of the ordinary, as his handling of Deanna Durbin has proved.

As crazy comedies go *The Rage of Paris* was pretty good. It had bright dialogue, some novel situations and a general *élan* that carried it successfully over those situations which were not so novel—notably the one in which the hero and heroine were marooned for the night in a country chalet. The French jewel (by the way, she does conjuring tricks, which makes her one up on Hepburn) had an eighteen-carat gold setting in Douglas Fairbanks junior, Louis Hayward and those great vocal and facial comedians, Helen Broderick and Mischa Auer.

Of *Prison Without Bars* it must be said at once that it was a very well acted and particularly well directed film. That it was a British production was another cause for rejoicing. Admittedly it was a remake of French success, but that, I think, is no reflection on director Brian Desmond Hurst. What might be said later was that the story was hokum, but again only after recognising that the story was well told and neatly worked out. The prison without bars

was a French girls' reformatory where a newly-appointed and sympathetic warden was determined to prove that young delinquents could be made to see the light by kindness instead of brutality. In this she succeeded after attempts by the staff and girls to thwart her, but she lost her lover, although he was not much loss to her. Taken all round the acting was some of the best I have seen in a British film. Corinne Luchaire played her original part, that of a seventeen year old victim of circumstances, with a strange, gawky beauty that was very moving. The girls were all good, but there was one, Mary Morris, whose personality proclaimed itself like a red ink stain on a white carpet. Fame and riches will most surely be hers in the near future. But the best performance of all came from Edna Best as the warden—no fireworks, just a quiet sincerity backed by great reserves of technique that made most American actresses seem like walking glimpses of the obvious.

Bernard Shaw has now allowed three of his plays to be made into films, or more properly speaking to be photographed. The first two—*How She Lied to Her Husband* and *Arms and The Man* were not very successful. The third, *Pygmalion*, shown last quarter, was enormously diverting, even if it was not a very good film. For Mr. Shaw, like Shakespeare, insists on having his dialogue left intact; in fact for him the dialogue is the play since he admits in his book on Ibsen that he regards action as "tomfoolery". Thus the directors of *Pygmalion*—Anthony Asquith and Leslie Howard—were faced with the terrible problem of forcing the words into filmic form. It is greatly to their credit that for two-thirds of the film they were tolerably successful. It was when they came to the third act that they were defeated. But then on the stage the third act was clumsy and tedious, in spite of the ingenious argufying.

It was very interesting to see how undated the fun was. The satire on the language barriers between the classes still holds good and the paradoxical quips at the expense of "refeened" accents and middle-class respectability still have as much truth as wit in them. The play will always be a classic even if only because it was the first play in which the word "bloody" was used on the London stage. When the famous line was spoken in the film it got the biggest laugh I have ever heard in a cinema.

The cast read like a Who's Who of the Theatre with people like Cathleen Nesbitt and Violet Vanbrugh having bit parts. Leslie Howard played Professor Higgins with great affability and intelligence and was very good indeed. If he had not been to Hollywood, it is possible that he would have been better still. Certainly Wilfred Lawson and Wendy Hiller, neither of whom have undergone the great Hollywood flattening process, were both better than Howard, and that is high praise indeed. Lawson took the part of Mr. Doolittle, which is certainly the showiest, if not the best, part in the play and treated us to a really magnificent display of character acting, although one must not forget that Mr. Shaw was to a large extent responsible for the treat. Miss Hiller was Eliza and she had the difficult task of graduating her accent from broad Cockney to clipped Kensington by slow stages. In this she was brilliantly successful, just as she was in her gradual change of appearance, outlook and character. In fact her performance proved that she could play a girl in any walk of life, from the lowest to the highest, and play her convincingly. What more could a film producer ask for?

If Harold Lloyd is wise he will pay whatever is necessary

and hire Capra to direct his next film. For his last film indicated that he needed some such rejuvenating influence. Not that the owlish little comedian is showing signs of wear himself, but his gags and situations are in sore need of new twists. *Professor Beware* was safe, well-tried comedy, but it was not as uproarious as one had the right to expect from Harold Lloyd. It had the traditional set-up of the shy young man who was bullied and imposed upon by crooks and painfully embarrassed by love, but who finally, fired by the miracle of love requited, turned on his enemies and bashed them all over the head. Somehow this time the fun seemed a little tired and that is why I hope that Lloyd will hand himself over to Capra for the next comedy. So far Lloyd's great popularity has relied first on his spotlessly clean humour—the young can take the old to see his films without fear of a blush—and second on his allowing himself to be the object rather than the instigator of the fun. There is no need to depart from the first virtue, but if the second is to be adhered to, there must be an inexhaustible supply of good gags—not wisecracks, they are not Lloyd's line at all. Talkies have rendered a great part of the slapstick stock-in-trade unmarketable; therefore it looks as though Lloyd will have to get himself a new character. And Capra would seem the best person for this job.

A remarkable example of personality-changing is Janet Gaynor. Gone are the days when she couldn't say boo to a goose, much less to a millionaire. Now she is all bustle and assertiveness, as could be seen in *Three Loves Has Nancy*, her latest film. The two loves that mattered were Robert Montgomery and Franchot Tone, and it was pretty to watch her making rings round them as the simple country maiden stranded in New York with nothing between her and

a fate worse than death except horse sense and an obstinate faith in the goodness of human nature. Bella and Samuel Spewack had a hand in the script and I suspect they were responsible for Janet Gaynor's dialogue which was often very funny and always well delivered. And I am sure they thought up the lovely sequence in the restaurant where the sophisticated Robert Montgomery was made to suffer agonies of embarrassment through Janet Gaynor's determination to be neighbourly with a couple of gangsters and her final dash with a jug of water to extinguish a dish of *crepes suzette*.

The Middle West of America came in for some satire from Hollywood last quarter. *Romance and Rhythm* had the welcome idea of deglamourising cowboys, but unfortunately the execution of the idea was not so good. Dick Powell dressed up in chaps and a big hat and did some crooning. Other people have unfortunately done that, but the difference in his case was that he was supposed to be afraid of animals. There was much better satire in *Three Men and a Girl*, which had the Ritz Brothers doing a violent take-off of Hillbillies most of the time, and at the end doing a hardly less violent take-off of Snow White and some of the dwarfs. The Ritz Brothers are always violent in their fun and they arouse violent passions.

Film titles seem to be getting longer and longer, what with all the "private lives of" and the "adventures of". Under the adventures section we had Hollywood's version of Marco Polo. The sets will make most people gape, the chronology will make some blink and the story will cause many to avoid their neighbour's eye. It was surprising to see Gary Cooper in this film since one had assumed that Lubitsch and Capra had placed him beyond the reach of history.



Spawn of the North

Paramount

BABEL CINEMA

From all over Europe come these films, reviewed below by ARTHUR VESSELO

IF IT IS normally true that the films of a country will in some way reflect that country's national characteristics, it is at least equally true that films produced under an authoritarian régime will in some way reflect that régime's ideology. This ideological reflection—greater or less according as the particular films are more or less seriously-intentioned—need not necessarily take the form of open political propaganda. There are subtler, less consciously-devised channels by which it may be conveyed; and in several of the films which we have received from Germany since 1933 this is especially clear.

Two examples come immediately to mind. In the stormy violence of *The Old King and the Young King*, the Nazi *Weltanschauung* ("German philosophy", oddly so-called) was severely implicit; and in *Das Maedchen Johanna*, cloaked horrifically in mediæval darkness, it appeared again. Now finally it comes to us once more in the turbulence and confusion of *Der Kaiser von Kalifornien*.

Each of these films does its obvious best to point a moral; and each wraps up its theme in manipulated historical facts, so as to make the moral more convincing. Nor has one country's history been thought sufficient: Prussia, France, America, are in turn called in, to impress us no doubt with the moral's universal application.

The Luis Trenker opus, *Der Kaiser von Kalifornien*, purports to be an account of the life of one Johannes Suter (or John Sutter—the central figure of the American film *Sutter's Gold*), who in the last century voyaged to California from his native Switzerland and in the face of hardship won for himself great wealth and influence. But gold was discovered on his vast estates, and from this point, apparently, his fortunes turned. The German film shows us in ruthless detail his property being invaded and despoiled, his young sons murdered by his enemies, and his wife dying of grief. Finally, as he still continues his fight against the mining interests, the mob runs wild and burns down the newly-risen township of San Francisco.

This elaborate charting of the course of material ambition—depicted as rising from nothing, against overwhelming odds, to undreamed-of success, and thereupon descending to utmost disaster and to a *Götterdämmerung* finale of symbolic fire—is made more remarkable by the introduction, in case the moral should escape us, of a phantom figure, who, having at the beginning urged the desperate Suter not to yield but to go ahead and conquer, arrives again at the end, when all has been lost amid blood and flames, and consoles him with muddled and meaningless abstractions. In fact the moral seems to be: worldly conquest leads inevitably to the pit of disaster—but it is good none the less.

A similar atmosphere hangs deep over the two earlier films, though, as is perhaps natural, the fatalistic principle of action involved is least explicit in *The Old and the Young King*, which is the earliest. Yet although in that the plot

follows superficially a rather different line, analysis will show that it embodies an intimately related aspect of the same ideology. Unquestionably the same grim and morbid spirit throughout prevails, and it is possibly no coincidence that Frederick the Great, of whom the story tells, was historically the man who, in the Seven Years' War, dragged his own Prussia along a gory road of death and destitution.

In *Das Maedchen Johanna*, however, the film's interpretation of the facts runs directly parallel to the theme of *Der Kaiser von Kalifornien*: in the whole mood, the predestined rise and fall of events, the climax in fire, and the confused but emphatic moral, it closely and extraordinarily resembles the other, however disparate the original circumstances in history.

Der Kaiser von Kalifornien is a film of many weaknesses—slow, oppressive, and heavily underlined in direction and acting; but its significance seems to lie in this strange repetition and expansion of a message which reads at last almost like a prediction.

As if for relief by contrast, Germany has sent us also during the last quarter *Wenn Die Musik Nicht Wäre*—retitled in this country *Liszt Rhapsody*—a film of that lighter type with which we are again well acquainted. When we have described it as a sentimental musical romance in nineteenth-century costume, we have probably said all that need be said about it. The Abbé Liszt enters in person, primarily as a benevolent *deus ex machina* for the solution of a boy-meets-girl problem, but wears his superimposed age and dignity, one fears, rather uneasily; there is a dirty foreigner of the most degraded and unspeakable villainy as the "heavy"; and there is also, as a makeweight, an agreeable characterisation from Paul Hörbiger in the part of a sympathetic and unworldly music-teacher.

Propagandist infiltrations into Soviet films have always been of a more straightforward sort than those in German ones, and Michael Romm's *The Thirteen* is no exception to the rule. This is a tale of heroic adventure in the Central Asian desert, said to be based on an actual incident which took place some ten years before the date of production. Thirteen Soviet nationals returning from service are held up by a notorious and "wanted" bandit-gang at a water-hole, and twelve resist attack while the other flies for help. Reinforcements arrive in time for the triumphant capture of the bandit-chief, but only at the cost of eleven of the twelve lives.

The elements of the theme are essentially simple, and they are not complicated by over-intricacies of direction or technique. Apart from a certain slowness in the rather long preliminaries, and an insufficient sharpness at first in the differentiation of the characters with whom we are mainly concerned, the general treatment is professional and effective. The heroics are fortunately kept comparatively in hand, the acting has conviction, and the

working-up of suspense, once the ground has been fully prepared, follows a sound normal plan. Opportunities of obtaining persuasive photographs of desert-scenes have been grasped; and editing of both picture and soundtrack, while expert in its field, pays no undue attention to either "montage" or "counterpoint". Whatever one thinks of the latter tendency (and opinions may very easily differ), its growth has been to be recognised.

And so to the French films—now, as ever, well in the majority. Probably most people's first thought in the context will be of Danielle Darrieux: with some justice, for at the moment of writing this youthful French star is to be seen in London in four separate films. As if to leave no doubt of her much-cried versatility, two of them, *Mayerling* and *Abus de Confiance*, show her in directly dramatic rôles, two, *The Rage of Paris* and *Mademoiselle Ma Mère*, in the lightest of light comedy. She emerges safely from her various tests, and in any case her feminine attractions are certain.

Neither of the two newest importations is in itself a work of surpassing genius. *Abus de Confiance* is the tale of a girl law-student who, at her wits' end through poverty, palms herself off on an elderly history-scholar as his illegitimate daughter, is torn with remorse at his gentle acceptance of her, and, in a formula-climax—guaranteed to wring the heart-strings—finds herself pleading in court for a girl who has done almost exactly the same thing. An Aristotelian analysis of the permissible boundaries of fictional coincidence has yet to be written; but there are some coincidences which instinct rejects point-blank, and this is one of them. The film's sanest moments are at the beginning, when the heroine still has the world against her, and everyone has not yet become sweet and forgiving. These opening sequences have their own grotesque and sordid strength: they also incidentally offer Mlle. Darrieux her fullest room for expressiveness.

As for *Mademoiselle Ma Mère*, this is a case where the reviewer is compelled to abandon impersonality. I saw this film on Tuesday, September 27th, when one could almost hear in imagination the noise of the warning sirens and the sound of the bombing-aeroplanes overhead. If in such circumstances the idea of unconsummated marriage, of stepmother and stepson falling in love, and of an irresponsible young female scatterbrain causing endless complications and intrigue, could not waken me to hearty laughter, perhaps that was not entirely the film's fault. But I have to record that at the time, at any rate, the windings of the plot seemed to me fatuous and puerile, the handling unoriginal, and the comedy tasteless and quite uncomic.

Of Jean Choux's *Maternité* one may say that the worst thing about it is the title; and the most striking, a ghastly if largely irrelevant pictorial study of an old man sunk dead and sprawling in a chair. The title, it is true, is hardly irrelevant, since the film is about nothing if not the trials and tribulations of motherhood; but the word suggests old-style wallowings in sentiment which up to a point we are fortunately spared. Up to a point. In this story of seduction, maternal renunciation, and sad "twenty-years-after" business, there are a number of thematic manoeuvrings which smack more of sentimentality and blatancy than they should.

What, however, gives *Maternité* its interest is the attempt in it to reinstate a form of expression which seems rightly to belong to the silent cinema. Swift movements of the

camera, sharp variations of tempo, and symbolic "montage" to arouse subjective moods, are here in abundance. How far are these elaborate visual methods at present justified? A partial answer is given in the inadequacy of the soundtrack, which shows distinct signs of cramping. The normal integration between picture and sound does not exist, and one feels that the latter has been squeezed out of its allotted place. Acting, again, becomes too often a matter of statue-like stationary "compositions" which hold up the film and interrupt its fluidity; while the degree of true subjective impression attained is doubtful. On the whole, between the extremes on the one hand of obscure and on the other of over-emphatic imagery, the illuminating mean is only occasionally touched.

Quite another kind of screen-style is that employed in Léon Mathot's *L'Homme à Abattre*, a recent addition to the popular "Second Bureau" series of espionage-melodramas, in which once more the intrepid Capitaine Benoit, handsome French spy, outwits his National Socialist adversaries. Here, as ever, the melodramatics are tempered neatly with known realities; and beswastika-ed Nazis, an "Anti-Aryan League" in Paris harbouring a Nazi spy among its members, and even a secret agent from Italy, add their flavouring of surface authenticity to the formula-dish. The names of the intriguing countries are not concealed, but at the same time the slightest hint of propaganda as such has been scrupulously avoided: so much so, that now and then the Germans in the tale appear a trifle colourless.

The technique of contrast is adroitly used—sound against silence, bright cabaret-interiors against the noise and darkness of anti-aircraft trials, sinister secret meetings against the innocent background of a museum or a toyshop, and the trivial or humorous against the menacing in general. Photography and acting are perfectly in tune with all this; and if, ultimately, the film remains little more than a competently-organised piece of hackwork, to be seen and forgotten, it still represents something in the annals of French production. Reliable machine-made goods imply a flourishing industry.

Reformatories, it seems, are in the news; and *Prison sans Barreaux*, with its English copy, affords a suitable counter to the American *Crime School* and *Boys' Town*. The American films deal with boys, the French one with girls; but all seem happily agreed that humane treatment is the only way, and that the old suppressive methods must be superseded. Admirable though these principles assuredly are, one is not immediately convinced that film-dramatisation of the problem and its suggested solution is likely to go very deep. Certainly the introduction of a stock romantic theme will not greatly help matters, and in both *Crime School* and *Prison sans Barreaux* the issue is thus obscured.

Allowing for this considerable element of romanticisation, and for the thunder stolen from the theme by the young and appealing Corinne Luchaire as a golden-haired semi-delinquent, turned along the right path by kindness, the French film is well-produced, relatively genuine in atmosphere, and—since comparison with the English version cannot be escaped—more natural on the whole than *Prison without Bars*. The latter's chief defect, apart from an alienness of manner which it does not fully overcome, is that it fails to convey the gradualness with which events do take their course in the original. In sum, however, it is probably wise not to take either as a particularly profound sociological comment.

SIMBA, THE LION

*Adventures with a ciné camera described
by J. D. S. PENDLEBURY*

THE ACCOMPANYING photographs were taken during the course of a short expedition in the Serengeti Plains, a large carnivora reserve in the north-west of Tanganyika Territory.

The expedition set out from Arusha, below Kilimanjaro, and, on the second day, reached the Plains. These extend, a rolling sweep, for nearly two hundred miles. The country is broken by occasional outcrops of rock, the habitation of lions and leopards. Some of these have even, in remote days, been occupied by man, and paintings occur in the caves with which they are honeycombed.

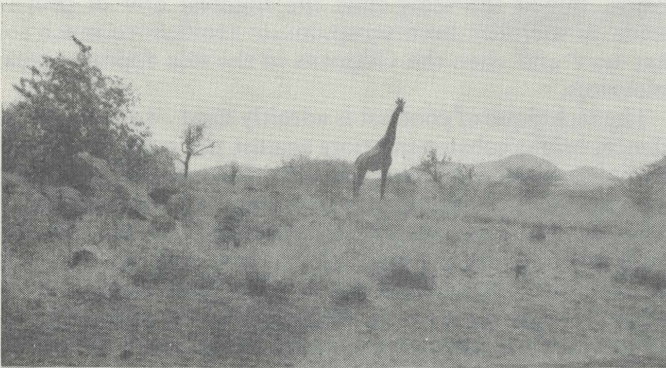
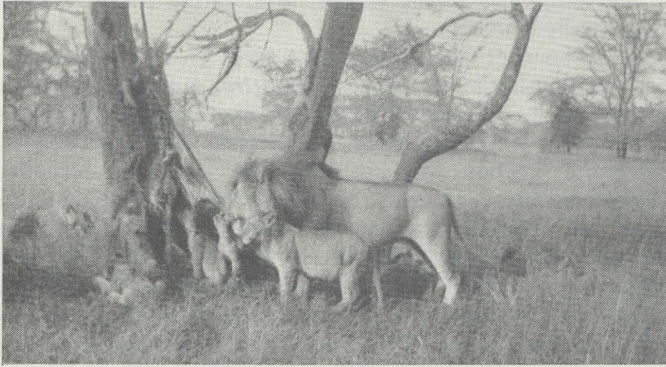
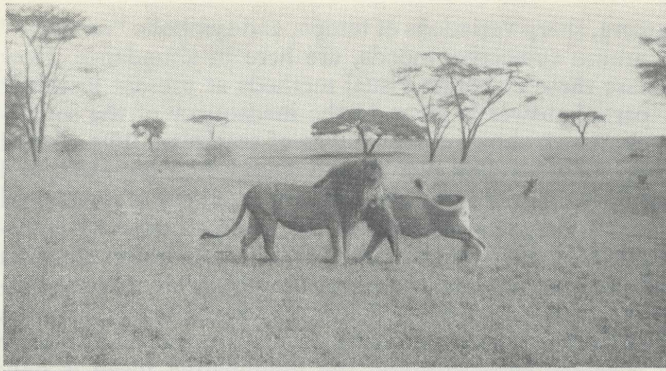
A view of any species of game is always a chancy business, but the leader of the expedition, Mr. R. Ulyate of Arusha, had for some time previously been on good terms with a family of lions which were accustomed to frequent a particular area. This family consisted of the father, a fine black-maned lion, some five lionesses, fourteen cubs and ten partly grown lions which had just broken away from the family group.

These animals were in no way tame. Indeed, never having been shot at, they displayed none of that fear of human beings which in nine cases out of ten causes the wild animal to depart without attacking. Thus very strict orders were issued that no member of the party was to get out of the car on any pretext at all, since the passengers as long as they remained seated were evidently regarded as part of the machine, which seemed to arouse not the faintest interest in the lions.

The procedure was as follows. An antelope or a gnu was shot and the carcass slung to a tree. In a very short time the lions appeared and the car was able to approach to within a very few feet. The ten partly grown animals which had broken away from the family were attracted to the reunion by trailing a kill behind the car. This proved a long business since the ten were evidently susceptible to the heat, which on that day was intense, and insisted upon retiring to every clump of trees *en route*, where they rested for some minutes in the shade, mopping their brows.

Once, however, the whole family was collected a most interesting series of notes could be made on their domestic economy. The respect paid to the head of the family was most obvious. The small cubs were allowed to crawl over father and take pieces of meat from his mouth, but any attempt on the part of the elder generation or the harem to feed before he was satisfied was greeted with a terrific exhibition of fury.

Lions are, on the whole, nocturnal beasts. It was amazing to see the way in which, during the day time, they were completely ignored by the vast herds of game through which they prowled. This may account for one of the most remarkable sights of the trip. A small pack of seven wild dogs were devouring a zebra. The cars were able to approach within a few yards of the scene and a discussion was in progress on the old question as to whether wild dogs were the most dangerous of all carnivora. Examples were given, by those better qualified to speak than the writer, of occasions when a whole section of jungle in India had been cleared by a small pack, even tigers taking



to their heels. The general view was, however, that these somewhat scruffy local specimens were incapable of inspiring terror.

Suddenly a group of nine lions was seen approaching over a low ridge some two hundred yards away. We held our breath. When the gap had lessened to a hundred yards the seven dogs turned with one accord and raced towards the lions. To the astonishment of the party the latter, any one of which it seemed could have swallowed three dogs without noticing it, turned tail and were shepherded out of sight by a single dog. The story is hard to believe but can fortunately be proved by a moving picture of the whole incident which has been shown at the Glasgow Exhibition.

These plains provide a very happy hunting ground for the photographer, and many admirable films exist of the wild life. Among other pictures at Glasgow was one which showed the punishment of two deadly sins, Avarice and Pride.

Two kills had been laid down for His Majesty, the father of the family, about fifteen yards apart. He only approached the first but saw to his disgust that a cloud of vultures had

settled on the second. He crossed in a dignified manner and moved them on. In a moment or so, however, he realised that they had merely transferred *en masse* to the other carcase. He therefore returned and repeated the performance. This continued until both the carcasses had been entirely devoured by the vultures, leaving a sadder, and, one hopes, a wiser, lion.

But it is not only the lions which give a peculiar fascination to this country. The gazelle and antelope are a perpetual delight, the Thomson's gazelle playing "last across the road" in front of a car doing 45 miles an hour, the gnus—the "Clowns of Africa"—gambolling in that erratic way which seems utterly without rhyme or reason but which, as hunters have found, makes them the hardest of all animals to capture. In the wooded hills my lord the elephant passes, a vast grey shadow. In the thorny scrub you suddenly see a queer slow motion picture which nevertheless moves with incredible speed—the giraffe.

But for one person at least the idea of all Africa is contained in the hollow roar followed by the lithe tawny flesh of sinew which marks the presence of "Simba"—the lion.

TECHNIQUE AND CRITICISM

Here are two new books, reviewed by H. D. WALEY and J. C. TREWIN

Motion Picture Sound Engineering. Research Council of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science, Hollywood. Chapman & Hall, 30s.

It is usual to attribute the excellence of American film technique to the size of the American film industry. This is a convenient theory because it excuses the British industry from any attempt at emulation. But a case might equally be made out for good organisation as the explanation of American excellence. If this suggestion seems on scrutiny to be well-founded, it might be used as an argument for copying some of America's most successful bits of industrial planning. Schemes for vocational education would certainly be among the activities which would deserve careful consideration.

The book under review has been produced as an integral part of a training scheme for film technicians organised by the Research Council of the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Early in 1936 this body appointed a committee on industrial education, which forthwith arranged and conducted a course in the Fundamentals of Sound Recording. As the applications for entry to the course more than doubled the number of students who could conveniently be received, the course was repeated after a short interval while, concurrently with the repetition of the elementary course, an Advanced Course on Sound Recording was arranged for those who had already attended the first elementary course and others having the necessary education and experience. This volume has been put together from stenographic transcripts of the lectures.

It is stated that its primary object is to provide a reference authority and this object it may be said to achieve most

adequately, especially in regard to the principles underlying the design of sound circuits.

The data provided are almost entirely theoretical, and accordingly deal with just that side of sound engineering which those whose duty it is to handle apparatus by rule of thumb might almost succeed in overlooking.

It is of course sometimes maintained that rule of thumb is the best guide for those who, in somewhat subordinate positions, have to service complicated apparatus.

The American studios, however, clearly believe the opposite, for the scheme from which this book originates was carried through with their enthusiastic support.

A little learning may be a dangerous thing, but a lot of ignorance is not a particularly safe one, and it is to be hoped that the publication of this volume will have among its effects the arousing of interest in possible schemes for making accessible to technicians a broader understanding of the apparatus which they handle than can possibly be obtained in the course of "the daily round and common task."

H.D.W.

Shakespeare Criticism. An Essay in Synthesis. C. Narayana Menon. Humphrey Milford: Oxford University Press. 5s.

The publishers say, rightly, that Mr. Menon's essay invites argument and discussion. There can be no doubt about that. This Indian critic puts his views vigorously and well; he is backed by a battery of Notes and authorities, but most students of Shakespeare, I imagine, will find in his book something to provoke them. That is the shining merit of this "essay in synthesis": Mr. Menon is not content to be a carbon-copy.

I want to join issue with him here on one point only—a point of vital interest to readers of *SIGHT AND SOUND*. Mr. Menon believes, in fine, that the plays of Shakespeare

should be filmed and that the screen is likely to be a more suitable medium for their interpretation than the stage. Shakespeare, he says in effect, would have welcomed modern resources. Probably; yet who can doubt also that Shakespeare, writing for the screen, would have cast his work in a different mould? The plays that make up the First Folio were designed for the Elizabethan stage and for an audience ready and accustomed to use its imagination. Shakespeare, matchless "descriptive writer", evokes a scene in a single phrase; his verse needs neither the top-dressing of elaborate theatrical display nor the cinematic trickery which Mr. Menon commends on p. 198. We remember what happened when Hollywood, well-meaning but misguided, made holiday with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

In one of his Notes Mr. Menon quotes from *Macbeth*: "Good things of day begin to droop and drowse. . .". And he adds, praising the resources of the cinema: "We can see the horizon darken, and the owls fly, while the wolves howl in the distance". But who wants this underlining? The phrase itself is sufficiently evocative without the Jungle Book chorus.

Mr. Menon says later: "The cinema alone can bring the panorama of life within the domain of art. It is sloughing off the technique which was forced on the drama by limitations." In other words, forward, Mr. Goldwyn! Stream your banners, Mr. de Mille! "Four actors", declares Mr. Menon, "cannot produce the effect of two armies at Agincourt . . . by viewing a pond one cannot imagine the majestic ocean". Nevertheless, "Henry the Fifth" has held the stage for more than three centuries. If Mr. Menon had seen Mr. Tyrone Guthrie's production of the play at the Old Vic. during the spring of 1937, he would have known what the stage can do without over-elaboration and false emphasis.

It would be manifestly unfair to condemn a stimulating and scholarly book of criticism because of disagreement with one of the author's theories. Mr. Menon's views on the cinema occupy barely half a dozen pages. There are other controversial sections; but, taken as a whole, the essay is valuable and revealing and none should miss Mr. Menon on the character of Falstaff.

J.C.T.

THEY DON'T FUSS IN FINLAND

There is no luxury about the studios in this little land, says IRIS CONLAY

DOWN ON West Harbour, where smoked herring packed in barrels smelt strongest, I found the studios. Behind was the sapphire sea set in chains of golden islands romantically, but the immediate foreground was just a pile of acrid tubs.

I made a way for myself between them and came to a meek grey door newly painted, Suomi Filmi. The harbour home of Finland's film industry is shared in Helsinki with the fisheries.

Some people may not realise that Finland has a film industry at all. I used to belong to those some. Until one hot Sunday afternoon sent me into the local sixpennies with the children and there I saw a Finnish film called *Pohjalaisia* (people who live in the North are called by this name), I had never heard of Finnish films.

Pohjalaisia got me all enthusiastic because it was about real people living the ordinary country life thirty years

ago—the kind of thing which I have hopes that England will still make about our own people. I knew that this Finnish film had no frills on life because it showed an existence, more primitive perhaps but essentially the same, that I myself had seen only a week back in the Northern parts of the country.

Much melodrama and dark Russian be-whiskered villainy and humour too broad for incomprehension, even by my lack of language, built up the character of *Pohjalaisia*. In spite of ponderous development, which we speed fiends find so tedious, I loved it in its poverty mainly for its unashamedness at being itself and for its scorn of Hollywood's production fashions.

Just the sincerity of this picture sent me off to West Harbour. Harbours are hardly the expected situations of studios, nor would our "La-De-Dah" stars really appreciate the delicacy of that herring aroma—(here I'll admit that with all my warmed up enthusiasm I found it a bit tough on my stomach). However, Suomi Filmi are hardier in every way than the preserved products of our studios, and I liked to see them that way. It made them seem more of an industry, and us more of a parlour game.

Studio conversation was a bit sticky at first. That was because the personnel, with all the willingness and charm in the world even to an interloper uncredentialed like me, couldn't make themselves understood. No one had any language that I had. So we called up the American Embassy, and with a central interpreter and one telephone got on grandly—one question and one answer per quarter of an hour, and we were lucky if the answers fitted the questions.

This way I discovered that these studios were new, two months old only and the rightful pride of Finland's Film Corporation; that the industry itself goes back into seventeen years of history; that my one Finnish experience in a cinema with *Pohjalaisia* was not with one of this company's productions; that they themselves were hard at work making best drawing-room drama-farce after the Ralph Lynn-Frederick Lonsdale pattern—this work entitled *A Day as an Heiress*; that they were also engaged on a more typical Finnish story from sixteenth century history, which, to my mind, promised greater things.

But achievement is not yet the interesting thing about Finland's industry—the excitement is still in their method and their promise.

From my first sight of the studios I realised how little fuss films mean in Finland. Elaborate film-star glamour is not known there. They don't build up reputations on luxury publicity or on face cream advertisements, and they have no false bottom talent. I saw dressing rooms furnished with the utmost taste and the least possible expense. It would be impossible to feel luxurious in wooden painted chairs or between white-washed walls. The astringent but cheery little restaurant suggested mere fitness-for-the-necessity-of-life purpose and nothing more. Workmanlike offices and two studios completed the unit, and nothing about the establishment allowed room for temperament. All whom I met were magnificent, hard-working artists who believed big things for Finland's film industry, and who did not consider themselves any more "chosen people" than does a street-cleaner.

And it seems to me that rare big things can come to Finland, and to other young units, if their people continue to keep their heads above this materialist luxury standard. All around them, in America's and Britain's studios, heads are being lost—and markets, too.

I REMEMBER

These days of "Flashbacks", "March of the Movies" and National Film Library shows of old films give the following reminiscences an added flavour. The author, well known in his time in the trade, prefers to sign himself simply as "OLD STAGER"

MY MIND TRAVELS back to the scene of a small cinema in the suburbs of a large Midland town.

We manufacture our own "juice" with the aid of a 20-h.p. National gas engine and dynamo, which is placed in the basement and next door to the stoke hole, where our Beeston Boiler provides the necessary heat for the hall.

The show commences each day at 6.30 p.m. This sounds like an easy job, but wait a minute.

To-day being Monday, I must be up and about by 8.30 a.m., rake out the boiler and start a fire, to be slowly burning during the day, otherwise the hall will not be warmed through by the evening; whilst down below, I rub down the engine, fill up the oil lubricators, empty the waste oil can into the filter, to be eventually transformed into nice clean oil again, quite fit for ordinary oiling purposes on the bearings of minor importance. I must also remember to give the belt a coat of castor oil which keeps it supple; this is very necessary as the drive is direct from the large 6 ft. diameter flywheel to the small dynamo pulley.

Now for a look upstairs in the "box", which really in our case is quite a large room at the extreme end of the building, housing a couple of Pathé projectors, with rewind room and storage room on either side. I remove the dust sheets from the machines, and first of all clean out each lamp, fit new carbons where necessary—or adjust, take out and clean the condensers and finally wipe over the mechanism, oil, and tidy up the room.

NO GOOD FAIRIES

It's now time to think about the arrival of the fresh films. In those days there were no good fairies to steal up to your door in the dead of night, as the modern transport contractor does to-day, and deposit your new films on the door step in exchange for the old ones, which he leaves also at their destination in a like manner. No, sir; our only favour was an advice note from the renters, to inform us that such and such a film was to be despatched from say the "Cosy Cinema" maybe in a neighbouring town, or as often as not, in some unheard of spot on the other side of the country.

If the operator had it packed and got away by good time on the previous night, we then stood a good chance of receiving it in time for the show; otherwise, our fate was in the hands of the railway company, and by sad experience, we had learnt to foretell by the name of the last users what to expect in this way.

On this particular day, the forecast is not too hopeful, so off to the station I go, two miles by tram to the L.N.E. and a further mile to the L.M.S. Maybe luck will be in, and our boxes there waiting in the goods office, but no, it is not so, and after inquiring the time of next trains, and the likelihood of it coming by the other line, I set off for the L.M.S. station and there pick up part of the programme.

By now it is 9.30, so I must get a move on. To-day I am

lucky; I have got the feature—a five reeler—and a small comedy and the Topical Budget, but am short of the two-reel serial, so that means another journey down this afternoon.

A GLAD EYE OFTEN HELPS

With the small "topical" box under one armpit and the large box on one side and small one on the other I struggle across the road to the tram, give the driver the glad eye and drop the lot at his feet in front—run round to the rear—jump aboard and off homewards.

Well, before lunch there are two or three posters to stick up outside, one a large six sheet on the gable end, so let's hope that there is no wind. How often have I had a wet sticky mess of paper flapping round my neck whilst perched on the top of a ladder, on a blustering March morning!

Fortunately my home is quite close to the cinema, so that I am soon in for lunch, and after a wash and a meal—ready again. Now for a peep into our "surprise packet"; for in those days we were always in a state of suspense as to what condition our films would be in on arrival. How often have I opened a box to see an apparently new film inside, but on running through on the rewriter to discover long stretches, many feet in length, with torn sprocket holes caused through faulty gate adjustment, patches of oil, horrible joints and other traces of bad handling by the previous operator. Or as often as not, we received films that should have been on the scrap heap long before—absolutely worn out—with joints every few inches apart, sometimes as many as three or four in a piece of film a foot in length. Joints made without even scraping or cutting off square, simply the two ends stuck to one another.

It was no uncommon thing to spend three hours examining and repairing a feature film before we dared to put it on the machine, and a hundred or so new joints would be made. Even after this precaution breaks would occur, and bad streaks, etc., show on the screen, which would have to be removed before the second show.

Such was the state of affairs then, but it was far more worrying when the films were late and towards late afternoon we had no news of their arrival, despite phone calls to the renters and last theatres, visits to the station to meet each train as it was due, etc.; and as a last resource, to hire a single reel comedy or a "Wild West" thriller—which was all that could be obtained from our local stockists.

AWKWARD MOMENT

Once, when an assistant at a show in the centre of the town, during the war period, we were due to screen a much boosted film of eight reels, and at this theatre the performance commenced each day at three o'clock, but on this occasion, in order to get through the exceptionally long

programme, we commenced an hour earlier. All the morning I had been at the station meeting each train that came in and eventually got hold of my little lot at about 1.30 p.m.; then a scramble to the tram; result—I laboured into the entrance and up the stairway to the circle (we had no private entrance to the box and had to reach same by the balcony stairs) to find that the wide steps leading up the balcony to the operating box were completely hidden by people sitting along them who were unable to find seats elsewhere.

At this point there was about one hundred feet to run of our newsreel, and after that—nil, until I arrived. As it was the lights went up before I reached the box door with my two cases (each must have weighed three quarters of a hundredweight). Once I did actually arrive back to find my assistant showing slides (he had run through his makeshift programme) and the house was getting pretty restless.

Which reminds me of our orchestra—a solitary pianist, but what a musician!

He could play any mortal thing, and vary his selections to suit each particular scene, all without the aid of music, but his only weakness was a terrible thirst! The manager used to be in the habit of keeping a supply of beer in the office to take him at the interval, otherwise he would vanish to the nearest pub and we would never know when to expect him back; this actually did happen several times, and you can well imagine how the old silent film went down without any “effects”. How crude it all was compared with a first-class show to-day! Yet even then we tried every conceivable way to make our entertainment perfect. I remember that we fitted an extra resistance board, so that there was one for each lamp. By this means I could take off two switches controlling the lamp being in use, strike up the other lamp and when my film was within about fifty feet of the end of the reel—stand between the two machines, start up the next machine and slowly open one shutter with one hand and at the same time close the other one, thus giving a dissolving effect on the screen; then of course I would turn to the switchboard and complete the change-over gradually, until I had the full load on the lamp now in use.

This worked very well indeed and cut out altogether the screening of “End of Part 1—Part 2 will follow immediately”. Incidentally, in the case of theatres with only one machine, this was not the case; and the interval was often a long one and was enlivened by loud chattering and raucous voices from the operator’s box, and whistling and cat-calls from the cheaper regions of the house.

Comparing conditions then with the duties of the operating staff to-day it really was a bit rough. The average full-time show employed one operator and a small boy as assistant, and until you could train your lad to mind the machines properly there was no relief whatever for eight hours at a stretch. I recall that during the latter part of my time as an assistant, my operator was sent away to another theatre to relieve a man who was ill, and I was left to run the whole thing for a week from 2.30 to 10.30 p.m. with two gas engines to maintain and a change-over to effect from one engine to the other about six o’clock each evening. To do this we had to start one engine up, which was in a basement at the other end of the building, then switch over the power, walk across the hall to the other engine room, and stop the one now not required.

During this particular week I had to keep a look out for

any likely member of the staff to come up and stand by while I rushed downstairs; and had to time it so that I left the box at the beginning of the reel, otherwise I should not be back in time to start the next machine. One day the only person I could see from my peep-hole was one of the directors standing on the balcony, and I signalled to him to come up and left him there with instructions to turn a certain knob on the lamp every few minutes.

Before I had got half-way down the gangway on the ground floor, the picture seemed to stand still for a second on the screen, and then a “blob” appeared in the centre, which spread rapidly over the whole screen. I realised what had happened: the film had jammed in the gate, the safety shutter remaining open, and was on fire. Rushing back upstairs I found my relief standing looking very perplexed and nearly suffocated with fumes, with the floor covered with film which was unravelling itself in all directions—jammed in the gate, the remainder still was being drawn out of the spool box and unreeling itself on the floor; that was the nearest approach to a real fire that I ever had. My wages for this week in charge were the princely sum of 12s., but needless to say it was not long afterwards I obtained my first position as chief operator.

So, present-day “first operators”, with your second and third assistants, when life seems hard, just think of the exciting times of your predecessors—which I for one would not have missed for worlds, and to which my mind often turns back, after paying my humble shilling at the palatial entrance of your modern cinema.

NEW BOOK—NEW PROJECTOR

Philip and the Dictator. Terence Greenidge. *Fortune Press.* 7s. 6d.

One assumes that this novel is intended to contain profound reflections on politics, on love and on life; the reflections are here, but one looks for the profundity, as well as for something more than mediocre writing, in vain. Its interest, if any, to the film-minded would seem to lie in the fact that the hero is a cutter in Wardour Street who works on what are described as documentary films; at one point he is allowed to direct a film; but these facts have nothing more than an incidental importance in the story, and the film enthusiast might find in their treatment a little too much of the incredibility which the author promises at the end of his first chapter is to characterise his tale. E. H. L.

We have received particulars of the new Amprosound arc lamp model which is being made available in this country. It is stated that with this model an illumination output of 650 to 830 lumens is obtainable. This, of course, should prove ample for a theatre-size screen. Such an instrument will be of interest to all users who propose to put up a fixed installation and run it regularly, as the high cost and short life of high wattage filament lamps is a material obstacle to the regular use of 16mm. projectors for long hours. It will also be valuable where maximum illumination is essential, as in daylight showing for publicity and propaganda purposes.

SOME POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS

Why not one Central Educational Film Library? asks R. S. MILES

THE USE OF the film in schools grows apace. Indeed demand is exceeding supply and means of supply. The educational value of the film has long been recognised and much valuable pioneer work done. The time is ripe for consolidation of this work and for planning future development. If it is not used, the most powerful weapon that education has been provided with since the printing press will have its value lessened and its appeal stultified on account of its haphazard growth.

Primarily, a standardisation of projectors must take place. It may safely be assumed that the 16mm. film has proved its worth beyond all question, and so production of 16mm. projectors has gone ahead by leaps and bounds. There are, on the market, a variety of projectors for work with silent and/or, sound films. I suggest that at the outside, two types for sound and two for silent should only be made. One could be of a cheaper variety. This would have many advantages. Production costs would be cheapened; advertising costs would be lowered; the acquirement of the skill for operating them would be easier because standardisation would allow of quicker distribution of ideas through talks or pamphlets, and local authorities would know beforehand how to adapt or build rooms most fitted for film demonstrations.

Secondly, the number of companies producing films specifically for the educational market has steadily increased, and will continue to do so if more schools are equipped to show their products. Already some of the evils of the system have appeared. Various film companies have the same film on their lists. From one it may be hired; from another it may be borrowed, the borrower to defray the cost of postage only. This system is obviously wasteful and I suggest that, with a market assured for educational films, the different producing companies should specialise on one particular subject. Thus specialised knowledge will be brought to aid specialised equipment which could be used time and time again without much trouble. Production costs would again be lowered and, paradoxically, greater efficiency secured.

Following from this argument comes that for the centralising of film libraries. At present, there are numerous film libraries, chiefly in London, but others elsewhere, distributing films which they have either made or bought. I contend that all these libraries should be amalgamated into one Central Educational Film Library, with the sole rights of distribution of educational films. From this would follow another very necessary reform, namely, the standardisation of hiring charges—if any. At present the conditions and prices of hiring films are in a higgledy-piggledy state. As I have said previously, a film which may be obtained from one library for postage only may cost 5s. per reel per day from another. There is no standard charge made—it generally varies from 2s. 6d. to 5s. per reel. In consequence of this many schools are forced to forego the use of these films because the hiring charges would form too big an item in the education committee's expenditure. Recourse is therefore made to the libraries where films

are available for nothing, and here the demand is far greater than the supply. The conditions at the Empire and G.P.O. Film Libraries are illustrative of my point. The demands on these Libraries are enormous.

Another point needing attention is that of the quality of the films available. This varies enormously and one cannot draw a line between good and bad types of films. Some advertising films are bad, while others are very brilliant. The Empire and G.P.O. Film Libraries contain some brilliant films very suitable for schoolroom purposes, and they also include some unsuitable ones for children. Suitability apart, it is undeniable that many films fall far short of a good teaching standard. The ones maintaining the highest level are those made specifically with a teaching object in view. This would seem to be the criterion for all new films, and it could be achieved through the medium of a central library as an examining body. If, however, all the prints of the films available for hire were to be housed in one building, it would have to be a huge one, and in such an organisation delays may occur. Regional centres of distribution, such as are to be found in Germany, would seem to be advisable. Primarily, regional headquarters are required to act as distributing agencies for their region, as a clearing house for all films and to maintain contact between the central library and local authorities. Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Bristol, would form admirable centres—among others. In these places would be housed all the films available for the particular areas—every area need not have the same films. The redistribution of them to other areas could be done through the central library. The director in charge of each area would be responsible for maintaining contact with all authorities in his area, which could be defined as the B.B.C. defines its regions. To obviate the necessity of large clerical and packing staffs in these offices, arrangements might be made with local authorities whereby each authority could be afforded the loan of a supply of films for a term and would then be responsible for the distribution of them in its own area.

Local authorities could then distribute films to schools—often by hand, thus saving costs of postage. A difficulty may arise here—the smaller authorities would not have such a choice of films as the larger ones. Another one may be that if each authority is to be in charge of distribution to schools under its jurisdiction, the advantages of localisation would be lost in the case of many county authorities. These two may be resolved by the overriding of administrative boundaries and making a large authority the distributing centre for its own area. Thus, for example, Stoke-on-Trent could act as centre for the City of Stoke-on-Trent, the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme and all county schools from Stone northwards to the Cheshire border. Apart from its local control it could act as a useful centre for previews and lectures to teachers. It would probably solve administrative difficulties if an official of the central library were to be in charge of the centre but accommodated at the local education office.

At the end of each term, the films would be returned to the regional office and those required elsewhere sent to the central library while all films would be overhauled. By this method, many of the difficulties of booking would be obviated. The necessity for booking films so far ahead of the desired date would exist no longer. Most teachers would be able to go to their local office and make their own selections. If the branch offices issued a pre-term list of the films which they would have, reservations and lessons could be the more easily arranged. Should any films be in great demand or the number of prints be few, arrangements could be made for transfer from one region to another through the regional offices and the central library. This system has another advantage—arrangements as to the length of time which films may be retained could be easily arrived at. At present films are hired for one day only. Thus a film is booked for Wednesday; it often arrives on the day previous and must be despatched by noon on the day following the booking. Consequently five days are occupied for one day's effective showing, or counting Tuesday and Thursday as days on which the film may be shown, two days are wasted during transit. From the teacher's point of view, the system is bad, because it means that the time-table must frequently be disarranged so that the classes, for whom the film is suitable, may see it.

The types of films to be produced, the subjects and other details, could and should be arranged by a committee composed of the Board of Education, the representatives of the local authorities and teachers, the producing companies and the British Film Institute, whose pioneer work should be recognised by giving it a key position in the scheme here outlined. The British Film Institute has technical knowledge and wide experience second to none, and the opportunity for using it should not be missed. The control of production and distribution should be left in the hands of the Board of Education. But it must not be forgotten that the teachers, better than anybody, can size up the demand because they use the films and can quickly see the gaps which require filling with new productions. Teachers should be kept abreast of practice in production, methods of projection and the technique of classroom use. They should have the opportunity of seeing all new films. These desiderata could not be better achieved than by the "regional" and "district" schemes here advocated where every teacher would be within easy travelling distance of his own centre.

This scheme has another advantage. It would bring producing companies, local authorities and teachers into closer union and this could result in the producing companies counting upon expert local knowledge and support should it be needed for films dealing with local developments or industries.

Finally comes the question of finance, and that is the crux of the problem. It is not insoluble. A joint fund provided by the Board of Education and the local authorities who might contribute according to their child populations could be arranged, and thus the whole of the scheme would come under a central control. The constituent members, the local education authorities, would be able to ask for films in proportion to their individual contributions. It follows that the system of hiring would be abolished and would be replaced by one of borrowing.

Developments on such lines as these are necessary if full use is to be made of this powerful accessory to education and if we are not to fall below the standard set in Germany and America.

"ACTUALITY IN SCHOOL"

SIR,

Your review of our little book *Actuality in School* in the last issue of SIGHT AND SOUND calls for some comment.

In claiming as we do in the first chapter that there is a great need for "actuality" in education, we have a sound psychological justification. For learning develops through observation and through manipulation of the concrete data of our experience. The child's adjustment to the world depends on the full satisfaction of his impulses of curiosity and constructiveness. It is therefore essential that reading should primarily be a means of helping the child to interpret his experiences. The great danger of reading with children as with adults is that it can give such satisfaction in a world of its own that the reader is inhibited in his normal and healthy adjustments to the living realities of the world around him. "It is damaging", as we say, "that we should encourage children to use reading as a method of escape rather than as an interpretation of reality . . . children should be finding drama and adventure from everyday life rather than from fantastic stories written by adults."

This is of primary educational importance. The living world must and can be appreciated by the child in all its humour and drama and vivid interest and there is enormous scope for the creation of narrative and verse based on the actualities of our everyday life. There is still far too much spurious fairy lore and "magic" literature supplied to children in school and these could well be replaced by stories of adventure in terms of the life that the child knows—heroic firemen, airmen, sewer men, shepherds and so on.

Does this mean, as your reviewer concludes, that we are saying farewell to "Treasure Island", and Crusoe, Carroll and Kipling, Andersen, Grimm and Shakespeare? That "in future the dreams of childhood will be peopled by romantic dustmen, milkmen and postmen, while no one will care that poetry with Puck has died."

In reply to the last sentence we feel that it will be a grand development when the imaginative skill of the mind of the child is based on his real observations and experiences. The fine artist, whether he is a painter, a dramatist or novelist, develops his imaginative creation through his real experiences of life. And through contact with his work we have a richer understanding of life.

In the light of this we shall need to look with a fresh and critical eye on children's literature and ask ourselves how far it is helping the child to develop a sound imaginative life; and perhaps some of us will feel a little sceptical of some of the works of Stevenson, Kipling, Carroll and Barrie, and even Andersen and Grimm. Though we may not say farewell to them we shall certainly be most selective in our use of them.

Yet for the child poetry and drama and stories do more than adjust him to the outside world. They help in his inner emotional life. They are an essential part of his education in feeling. To live imaginatively in some of the old tales of the world, the tribal tales, the Greek and Norse myths is of great value to the child. For in these tales he finds some of his most urgent inner conflicts resolved and his primitive feelings expressed. There is a significant place for such stories in school. While as for poetry, so long as it is made of measures to which the feet can dance and the voice can sing, it will never be eradicated from a sane education.

To refer once more to our book, *Actuality in School*, and in particular to the need for finding drama and adventure in everyday life. In the chapter on "Film" we show how essentially the sound-film can function in education in giving this sincere interpretation of the world in which the child is living. Here we have an art more vivid than the written word, that is substituting the written word as entertainment for thousands of children. Here is a most effective means of developing a rich imaginative outlook in the young, and this is destined to have far more significance for many of them than Carroll, Kipling, Andersen, Grimm—yes, and even Shakespeare.

CATHERINE FLETCHER AND G. J. CONS

OPTICAL AIDS

A review, by H. D. WALEY, of the Board of Education's new pamphlet. The extracts and illustrations are reprinted by permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office

OPTICAL AIDS. Board of Education Educational Pamphlet No. 115. H.M. Stationery Office, 1s. 6d.

Until quite recently advocacy of the use of the cinema in schools was often accompanied by an attitude of lofty superiority to still projection. In fact exhortations to install cinema projectors in classrooms were habitually accompanied by exhortations to lay aside the old-fashioned magic lantern! Experience of the actual use of the moving picture in the classroom has recently, however, tended to produce an opposite tendency, an appreciation of the various undeniable merits of the still projector, and a willingness to turn these to account, by teachers now thoroughly initiated into the mysteries of projection in general. The idea of moving and still projection as rival systems competitively courting the schools' favour is now obsolete. The conception of two indispensable aids each supplementing the work of the other has superseded it. It is therefore very opportune that the publication of this Pamphlet, which covers still as well as cinema projection, should follow closely on the publication of the two British Film Institute Pamphlets, "Choosing a School Projector" and "Using a School Projector", which necessarily concentrated on cinema projection. The Board of Education Pamphlet opens with a survey of the present range of optical aids, including standard slide projectors, sub-standard slide projectors, film-strip projectors, 16mm. cinema projectors sound and silent, episcopes, and combinations of these instruments. The individual characteristics of each type are discussed and some interesting observations are added on the probable trend in optical aids during the near future. It is pointed out that "Before the introduction of ciné in schools the only effective optical aids were the standard lantern and the episcopes. The value of the latter was emphasised by the cost and inconvenience of making slides for the former. The situation to-day has been changed by the introduction of substandard material which provides photographic diapositives in black and white at low cost and in suitable form for mass reproduction, and also provides economical pictures in colour; it has been changed by recent developments in the form of $3\frac{1}{4}$ in. projection material which now includes unprotected cut film and mechanically printed transparencies; and it has been changed by the growth of the organised supply of picture material. The organisation of the supply of picture material, and technical advances in both the standard and sub-standard forms, would not have great significances if the projection by the episcopes was as efficient as that of the diascope, but it is not. The trend in recent years had been towards higher power in diascope projection, both still and ciné, and thereby towards daylight projection. No episcopes yet produced can compete with the diascope in daylight use; indeed it may be said that at present the use of the episcopes is necessarily associated with serious reduction of the lighting of the room. For this reason the increase of the competitive power of the diascope is likely to influence the use of the episcopes."

The information imparted in this Pamphlet is given in terms which should be easily understandable even by newcomers to the subject, yet it contains much matter which will be found novel and suggestive by pioneer practitioners of school projection.

"Inspiring" is perhaps an unusual adjective to apply to official Government publications, but there is a quality in this leaflet which evokes the word in spite of—or perhaps really because of—its meticulous attention to points of practical detail.

The value of a pamphlet of this kind can only be properly illustrated by the use of extensive excerpts and the reproduction of illustrations. The Controller of H.M. Stationery Office has kindly given permission to SIGHT AND SOUND to supplement the review with the extracts which follow:

PROJECTION TROLLEY

"The design of the projection trolley demands careful thought: it must be narrow enough to pass between lines of desks, but it must not be top heavy, even when it is loaded with heavy apparatus on the top; it may be necessary to weight it at the bottom to lower its centre of gravity. For freedom of movement it should have castors and not wheels in fixed position, but to prevent annoying movement while a picture is being thrown there should be wheel clamps or floor jacks to fix and steady it. The shelf which is provided for the resistances and transformers should be placed as low as possible to increase the stability of the trolley.

"To reduce the risk of overturning it in the event of a stumble over the connecting cable, this should be secured at a low level to one of the legs, and a hook should be provided for the cable. Means should be provided for clamping the apparatus to the top so that it is not displaced by an accidental pull or similar mishap. At an intermediate level a cupboard may be provided for spares and projection material. When movable screens are used, whether collapsible or not, provision should be made for them at the side or end of the trolley. The aim should be to make the whole quite self-contained.

"In the trolley shown in figure 12 the supply is received and transformed to 100 or 110 volts. It is then taken to switches and plug sockets which are mounted on a panel. The switches should be so placed that they are accessible from the front of the trolley or from either side. The switches—and all other fittings—should also be mounted so that they cannot be knocked when the trolley is moved about; for this reason they should not be mounted on the end or the sides.

"The middle shelf should have deep sides so that flexible cable can be left in it and will not slip over. The cupboard should be provided with locks, for it may be used to house spare lamps and similar details.

"The top should be beaded or similarly protected to prevent apparatus sliding off. The holes which are made to take cable should be large enough to pass the plugs.

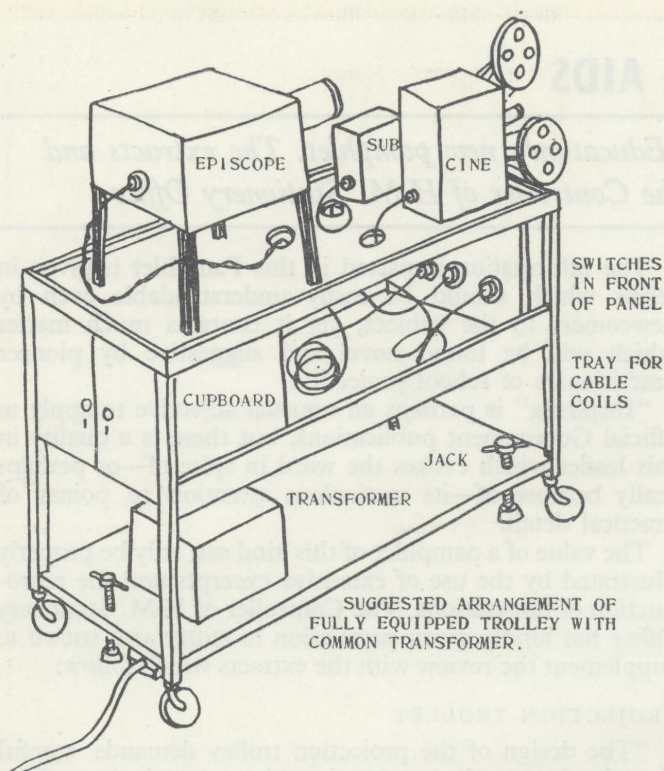


Fig. 12

"The castors should be of large diameter, and it is an advantage that they should be sprung.

"A good dust sheet should be part of the equipment—it can be folded and left on the middle shelf when not in use.

"The electrical circuit is shown in figure 13; this is simple and the only point which demands special comment is the earthing of the secondary winding. If this is done the safety of the apparatus is increased.

"ARRANGEMENT OF A PROJECTION ROOM FOR THE HALL (FIGS. 18 & 19).

"Sixteen millimetre cine apparatus is very compact, so is the film itself. Projectors can be obtained which will take 1,600 feet of film which will run for more than an hour if silent and about 45 minutes if the film is sound film. The interruption which takes place when a film is changed is therefore infrequent and there is no need to instal two projectors merely to eliminate these interruptions, as would be necessary if 35mm. films were employed. The only part of a silent machine which is likely to fail sooner or later during projection is the lamp, but the lamps are standardised, and in well-designed apparatus they can be removed and replaced quickly. In sound projectors the exciter lamp may fail, but it can easily be replaced and, more remotely, there is risk of failure of any of the valves in the amplifier. The risks of mechanical breakdown are very small indeed. Therefore in the school hall there is little need for the installation of more than a single cine projector. In addition to the cine projector a simple lantern slide projector should be installed."

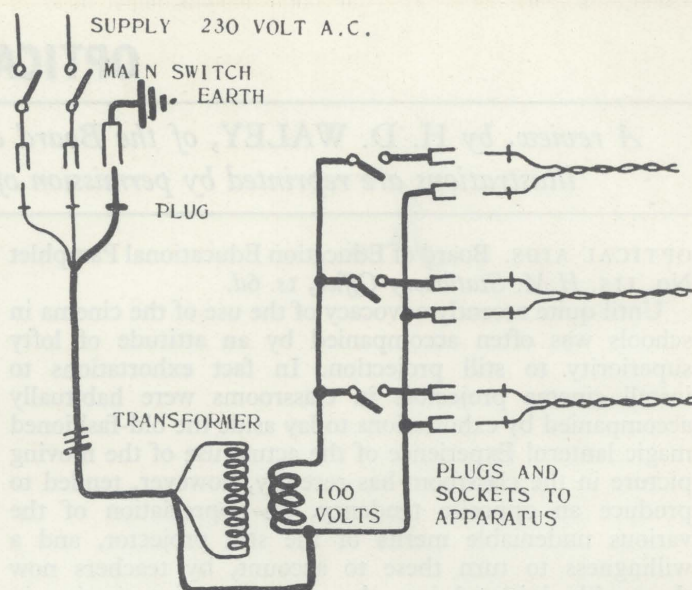


Fig. 13

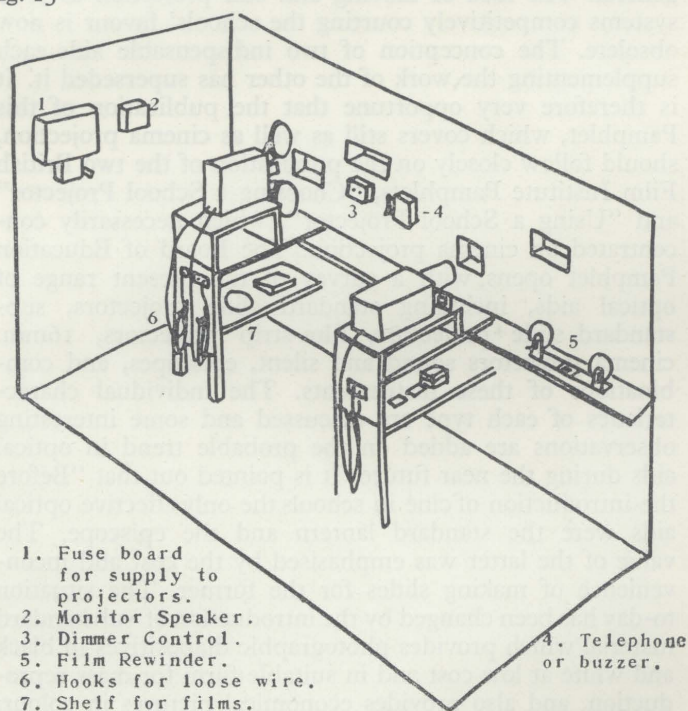


Fig. 18

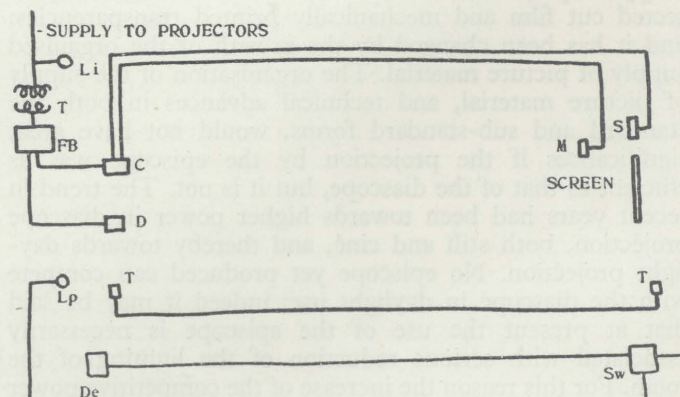


Fig. 19

TELEVISION TECHNIQUE

Do you remember the early days, when television was a wonder known only to the few? There have been giant strides since then and Wardour Street is now seriously facing the possibility of a rival. Below A. W. HASLETT recollects times past and anticipates some things to come

TELEVISION IS a new form of entertainment, with a technique and methods that differ alike from those of the film studio and of the theatre. Those differences go back to the beginning of television, as we now know it, and seem likely to persist; for television is neither the cinema nor the theatre, though it may borrow from both, but something on its own.

It was on a weary afternoon in August, 1936, that after standing on my two legs, waiting for somewhere about two hours, I saw Pogo, the wonder two-man horse—and laughed. More, I forgot that I was watching the first demonstration of high-definition television from the new Alexandra Palace transmitting station; forgot all those strange alarms in which some had talked improbably of sabotage by jealous radio manufacturers, and others more probably of a breakdown in the plant; forgot even that I had been sent to Olympia by a daily newspaper for the express purpose of studying a new form of entertainment.

A little later, and the tapping feet of Chilton and Thomas were intriguing us in a close-up, faded slowly from a full-length view, and with the catchy accompaniment of that childish little song "Pit-pat pit-pat in the rain" ringing in our ears, that early band of critics again forgot all the problems of scanning frequencies, synchronisation, bandwidth and even interference in which it had for some months been its duty to instruct the public.

TELEVISION ARRIVES

Television, in fact, had arrived, for entertainment had replaced—even if only for a few minutes—analysis of the possibilities of entertainment. It is true that in those early days, the scales fell often enough from the eyes. Sometimes the film used in the intermediate-film process would break. Sometimes, with either process, "vision" would unaccountably disappear, leaving only the voice of commentator or performer for the moment, at least, unaware that he was smiling or grimacing into blackness. On other occasions, the figure on the screen would be invisible for another reason. There would have been no time for rehearsal, and to the eye of the television camera and therefore to the "viewer" the colour of the performer's frock would appear almost identical with the background provided by a well-meaning producer. More often, synchronisation would be temporarily at fault, and a wild stream of identical pictures would flicker in downward chaos across the receiving screen.

There were, of course, other moments which impressed the memory—the self-possessed figure of Mr. Leslie Mitchell explaining, as he often had to, that it would be all right in the end if we would only wait, and in the meantime talking sheer nonsense to fill up the gap; the brief appearance of a few feet of film of the *Queen Mary* which had been rushed up only a quarter of an hour before

from Southampton; and the recurrent interest of watching the commentator, visibly perched on the balcony of the Palace, as he explained the beauties of the local landscape for the sole purpose of convincing us that this really was television and that the changing sweep of the camera was instantaneously unfolding before our eyes.

STRENGTH AND LIMITATIONS

The difficulties, or most of them, have passed. Television really is entertainment, not in fragments, but as permanency. Yet even in those first experimental transmissions, it was possible to detect both the strength and the limitations of television; and in frank discussion with producers to discover that the long-suffering staff at the Palace was successfully feeling its way through the new medium. In some ways, perhaps, the essential principles stood out even more clearly, for nothing that was not good could survive the technical limitations of uncertain transmission.

The first limitation is so obvious that it is often overlooked. The normal television screen is measured in inches, a cinema screen in feet. That means, although it was not at once realised, that the average cinema film is for a considerable part of its length essentially unsuited for television. Close-ups, yes; full-length figures and middle-distance action, yes; distant action, crowd-scenes, and elaborate background effects, no. *I Was A Spy* brought out both points very clearly. It showed, and the verdict still stands, that while a film made for television might be suitable for the cinema, a film made for the cinema would be only partly suited for television.

The same film carried a further realisation—that tragedy and drama could carry their effect on to the television screen. The pigmy figures did not matter. These Lilliputians of the cathode-ray tube could move as surely in their hour of fate as the Brobdingnagians of the cinema theatre. Other films, and also studio transmissions, showed that sentiment is more uncertain.

FIRST WITH THE NEWS

The success of Pogo—the first bright spot in television—showed that laughter could be "put across". The producers at the Palace have not forgotten the lesson. Similarly, the quick feet of Chilton and Thomas proved that dancing, grave or gay, "tap" or ballet, provides an effective subject. The success of that quick fading from full-length to close-up, from one camera to another, was also prophetic. The television camera has, in this respect, the advantage over the film unit in that pictures from two cameras can be "mixed" with no more effort than the turning of a knob. In the pride of early production, there was perhaps a tendency for this power to be abused. Yet it is, and must

remain, an essential part of television technique—something of its own. And it can be highly effective.

Those brief “shots” of the *Queen Mary*, rushed up from Southampton, underlined the main advantage—speed—which television possesses in news presentation. We saw it again, and to better purpose, at the Coronation when in spite of rain and all other difficulties the royal procession could be watched, at the time of its passing. And, even if a film is necessary, the fact remains that one film can be rushed to a television station more quickly than a hundred films can be rushed to a hundred cinema theatres.

OUTDOOR BROADCASTS

The original outdoor broadcasts in the Palace grounds—indistinct often enough in the haze of that first autumn—forecast the wider scope of modern “o.b.’s”, whether transmitted to the Palace on the now famous television cable or relayed from a mobile radio-transmission van, as in the case of Wimbledon, the Boat Race, a Test match, or whatever it may be next. The emphasis from the start was on the fact that one was really looking instantaneously at what one saw; and this advantage, not only in time but psychologically, must persist. To watch the Boat Race at a distance is a very different thing from seeing a film of it later in the evening. And yet for an evening audience the cinema theatre will have the advantage—even if the television record is later “canned” for a second transmission.

A PROFOUND DISTINCTION

Finally, all those early television programmes had an essentially personal quality, which later direction has sedulously maintained. It is of the essence of television, as cannot be too often repeated, that there is direct communication between performer and commentator on the one hand and each individual “viewer” on the other. Moreover, the audience is, and is likely to remain, for the most part at home. And in this fact lies perhaps the most profound distinction between television and any other form of visual entertainment. Whatever else it may be, television is not the same thing as “going to the pictures”. And “going to the pictures” may be expected to persist as a social habit, even though television may be available at a reasonable cost in the home. There is room, in other words, for both forms of entertainment.

On the other hand, there is bound to be some overlapping, particularly in the sphere of news. News films are an inevitable part of television programmes, for not all news can be televised and not all news happens at a time suitable for direct television. Moreover, even in studio productions, the Palace makes use of a film unit on occasions to introduce atmosphere effects which cannot be managed on the “set”.

Similarly, it is inevitable that televised news should ultimately play an important part in cinema programmes. Yet the news film will still be required—probably for the majority of events—because news is happening all the time, often simultaneously, and in any case only a minority of news is sufficiently urgent to justify dislocating a cinema programme for its inclusion.

The address of Messrs. Cinescopic Instruments and Services Ltd., given incorrectly in the Spring issue of SIGHT AND SOUND, is 29 Paternoster Row, E.C.4.

The film, *Bristol—City of a Thousand Years*, mentioned in our Spring issue as obtainable from the Bristol Development Board, is at present available only on 16mm.

TECHNICAL ARTICLES

The papers containing the articles mentioned below may be seen at the Institute’s premises by arrangement.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Light Control in Photography; G. Mili (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, April).

Spectral Distributions of the Radiant Energy from Carbon Arcs; F. T. Bowdith and A. C. Downes (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, April).

Sensitivity Tests with an Ultra-speed Negative Film; P. H. Arnold (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, May).

A New Motion Picture Camera Crane; E. H. Heyer and E. L. Fischer (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, May).

Technique of Movies with Microscope; John Maurer (*Movie Makers*, April).

Using Variable Camera Speeds; Jackson M. Hackett (*Movie Makers*, April).

Exposing Kodachrome; F. G. Beach (*Movie Makers*, May).

Close-ups with Supplementary Lenses; R. Fawn Mitchell (*Movie Makers*, May).

The Four Ways of Focusing; F. G. Beach (*Movie Makers*, June).

Aus der Tricktechnik des letzten Jahres (*Filmtechnik*, April-May).

Problems Involved in Full-colour Reproduction of Growing Chick Embryo; E. S. Phillips (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, July).

The Multiplane Camera Crane for Animation Photography; W. E. Garity and W. C. McFadden (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, August).

Problems in the use of Ultra-speed Negative Film; P. H. Arnold (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, September).

Frame Enlarging; Charles R. McLendon (*Movie Makers*, September).

Parallax in Close-ups; F. G. Beach (*Movie Makers*, August).

SOUND REPRODUCTION

The Sound-level Meter in the Motion Picture Industry.

A Horn Consisting of Manifold Exponential Sections; H. F. Olson (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, May).

Die Forschungsergebnisse der Raum-und Bauakustik, 1937 (*Filmtechnik*, April-May).

An Optical System for the Reproduction of Sound from 35mm. film; J. A. Macleod and F. E. Altman (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, July).

SOUND RECORDING

Scoring Stage Design; M. Rettinger (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, May).

New Ideas in Mobile Sound Recording Equipment; C. M. Ralph and J. G. Matthews (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, May).

A Sound-Film Phonograph; D. Canady and V. A. Welman (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, May).

Pick-up for Sound Motion Pictures (including Stereophonic); J. P. Maxfield, A. W. College and R. T. Fricbus (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, June).

The Philips-Miller Method of Recording Sound; R. Vermeulen (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, June).

Push-pull Recording with the Light Valve; J. G. Frayne and H. C. Silent (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, July).

An Ultraviolet Push-pull Recording Optical System for News-reel Cameras; G. L. Dimmick and L. T. Sachtleben (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, July).

Application of Non-Linear Volume Characteristics to Dialog Recording; J. O. Aalberg and J. G. Stewart (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, September).

PROCESSING

A Modern Motion Picture Laboratory; C. L. Lootens (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, April).

Processing of Ultraviolet Recordings on Panchromatic Films; J. O. Baker (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, July).

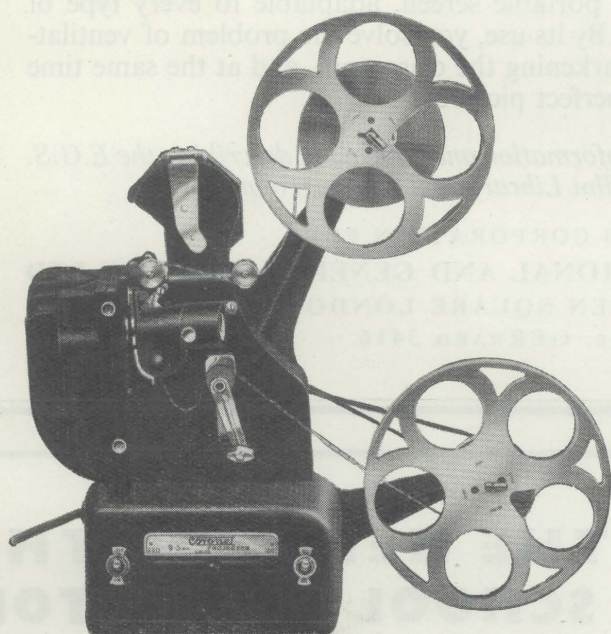
Negative-Positive Technic with the Dufaycolor Process; T. T. Baker (*S.M.P.E. Journal*, September).

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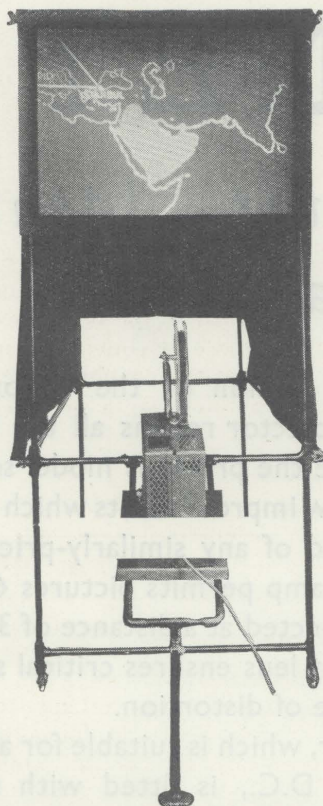
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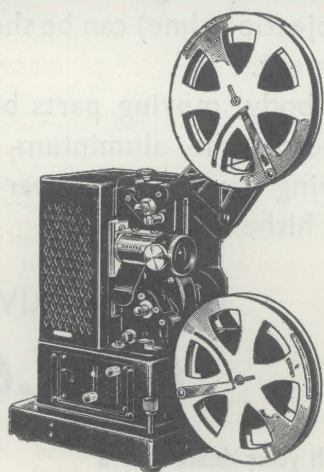
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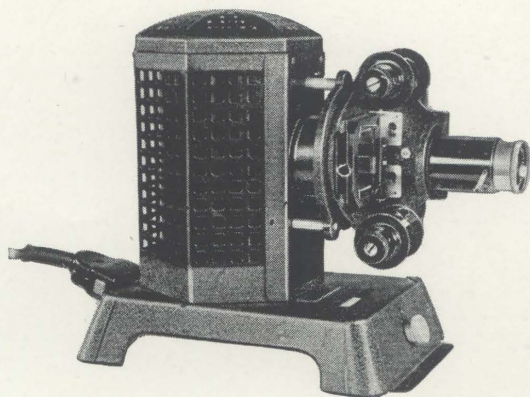
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35m.m.

16m.m.

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